



Jordan Times

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Papandreou's condition worsens

ATHENS (AFP) — Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou has suffered a relapse a week after being admitted to hospital with pneumonia, according to a medical bulletin Monday. The prime minister's respiratory system worsened during Monday evening and that affected his renal functions, said the report from the Onassis Cardiology Centre. It said he may need to undergo dialysis later, in which impurities in the blood are artificially cleaned because the kidneys are not able to do it. Government spokesman Telesmaque Hyiris said a medical team was meeting to discuss how to continue treatment. Earlier Onassis centre head Grigoris Skalkas said Mr. Papandreou admitted to hospital on November 20, had "greatly improved" and would be able to leave "in a short while." However he was speaking before the report that the premier's condition had worsened.

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Syria offers full peace for full Israeli pullout

BARCELONA (Agencies) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa, responding to a face-to-face appeal from his Israeli counterpart, told a Euro-Mediterranean conference on Monday that Syria was ready to make full peace with Israel in return for a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

"If what the Israeli foreign minister, General (Ehud) Barak, said constitutes a commitment before this conference... then Syria is ready with all objectivity to commit itself to full peace in return for full withdrawal, coupled with measures that guarantee security for both sides," he said.

Mr. Sharaa was responding, through the chair, to a dramatic personal appeal from Gen. Barak, a former armed forces chief-of-staff who became Israel's foreign minister only last week, at the first multilateral forum to be attended by both countries.

The Syrian minister said that if Gen. Barak's pledge that peace was of strategic importance to Israel and the Jewish state was ready to take account of Syria's security interests was true, "then we can achieve peace within the next few months."

However, he said peace could not be achieved in the Middle East unless Israel withdrew to its borders before the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and guaranteed "the legitimate rights of the Palestinians."

to fight terrorism, saying it was necessary to distinguish between terrorism and "legitimate freedom-fighting" against racism and foreign occupation.

Earlier, Gen. Barak told his Syrian counterpart in his opening address: "Let's make peace."

"I look at this conference hall and I see representatives from Lebanon and Syria, including my counterpart Mr. Sharaa. Permit me to address a few words to you," he said.

"We have been rivals on the battlefield and shed the blood of our courageous soldiers, the finest sons of Syria and Israel."

meet Gen. Barak on the sidelines of the two-day conference.

The conference is the first time in four years that Syria has attended an international forum also involving Israel, outside U.N. assemblies.

The two countries' peace talks are deadlocked over the terms of an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

The European Union has repeatedly stressed that the Barcelona conference would not be a forum for the Middle East to air its problems.



CROWN PRINCE RETURNS: Their Lawzi, Lower House Speaker Sa'ad Hayel Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Srour, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Princess Sarvath returned home on Monday. The King's Private Chamberlain Prince after a short working visit to the United Kingdom. They were received at the airport by Ghazi Ben Mohammad, the King's cultural secretary, and Princess Rahma Bint Al Hassan per House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al and other senior officials (Petra photo)

Euro-Med partnership will consolidate peace - Jordan

BARCELONA (Petra) — Jordan believes that a partnership with Europe will enhance peace, security and stability in the Middle East region, Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kaharid said Monday.

Delivering Jordan's address to the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean conference, the minister said that the common principles and denominators between the countries of the Mediterranean region and Europe are bound to help make the partnership between them succeed.

It is hoped, said the minister, that the Barcelona declaration will help lay the foundation for this partnership and the mechanism needed for its implementation, adding that Jordan views the partnership as another stage in the peace-building process in the Middle East.

international legitimacy and the principle of land for peace.

He also said that the Kingdom is looking towards the attainment of sustainable socio-economic development, which can provide a better future for the peoples of the region.

Jordan looks forward to the restructuring of its economy with the help of international institutions and through modernisation of its economy and financial legislation with a view to encouraging investment, said Mr. Kaharid.

common denominators with Europe in terms of respect for democracy, political pluralism and human rights.

He said Jordan is looking forward to establishing genuine partnership with Europe to promote socio-economic development and liberate trade and create investment opportunities.

To achieve that goal, he said, Jordan needs help in overcoming major difficulties like foreign debts, which is a burden shouldered by the Kingdom as a result of the difficult circumstances that faced the region in the past.

Peres demands amendments to PLO's charter

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel Prime Minister Shimon Peres said on Monday the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) had to accept amendments to its charter that call for the destruction of Israel, or else PLO-Israeli peace agreements will be stopped.

After his first appearance at parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee since taking office last week, Mr. Peres said reporters:

"Mr. Arafat has to change three items in the Palestinian covenant that call for the destruction of Israel. This is part and parcel of the agreement. If they will not respect it there will not be a continuation of the agreement."

The latest PLO-Israeli agreement on handing over parts of the West Bank to Palestinian control, signed in Washington in September, states the Palestinians will make the changes two months after elections, expected in January.

Palestinian National Authority (PNA) member Ahmad Qouria, a senior Palestinian negotiator, said in reaction to Mr. Peres' remarks: "Peres should not convey to us threats on this issue."

The Palestinian charter is the PLO's political programme. It has never been changed since it was written in 1964 and can be amended only with approval of all 11 factions and a majority of more than 450 members of the Palestine National Council.

"If the Palestine National Council does not annul the charter, it will perhaps be time to dissolve this council," Mr. Peres warned Monday.

Mr. Arafat first agreed to amend the charter in a letter before the signing of the September 1993 declaration of principles. The commitment was repeated in the Sept. 28 accord to extend self-rule on the West Bank.

The Israeli army broke into an office of the militant group Hamas in Tulkarem, witnesses said.

An Israeli army spokesman confirmed the report. The witnesses said the army forcibly entered the office of Al Zakat charity.

No Barak-Sharaa meeting on the cards in Barcelona

From Ghaila Alul in Barcelona

CHANCES FOR the first ministerial meeting between Syria and Israel since the launching of the peace talks in Madrid in 1991 appeared to vanish Monday with Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak saying he did not believe the meeting would take place.

"Mr. Barak and his Syrian counterpart, Farouk Al Sharaa, were expected to meet along the sidelines of the Euro-Mediterranean Barcelona conference amidst hopes that the meeting would help reactivate the stalled Syrian-Israeli peace talks."

Mr. Barak, who took over as Israel's foreign minister last Thursday, told reporters that "I do not believe the meeting (with Mr. Sharaa) will take place."

"It is known that the Syrians have for a while refused to put their confidence in protocol meetings, before negotiations" achieve substantial progress, Mr. Barak told reporters at the Juan Carlos hotel in Barcelona.

The Barcelona conference, which brings together the 15 member states of the European Union (EU) other European states and 12 Mediterranean countries, is the first international conference in which the foreign ministers of Syria and Israel are participating at the same time.

Sources said that Egyptian Foreign Minister, Amr Musa, as well as the Spanish hosts of the Barcelona meeting, tried in vain to arrange for a meeting between the two ministers Monday.

Prices take a dive at AFM

By Khaled Zubeidi Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Shares at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) on Monday dropped to below the 150-point psychological barrier after a gradual decline in share prices, which lasted for three weeks.

The price index Monday closed at 148.66 points. The sudden drop caused fears among dealers and investors at the market of a steep drop of prices of shares, which were already suffering because of political, economic and administrative factors.

Abdul Muteleh Abu Hajleh, a dealer, blamed officials for the drop and said the government was not doing enough for the market, accusing the government of negligence.

Prices take a dive at AFM

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Several other dealers shared Mr. Abu Hajleh's view that there was a need to have a careful study of the reasons for the drop.

Mr. Abu Hajleh of the Universal Brokerage Company, who is also deputy director of the Dealers Society and former member of the AFM board, said the large number of new companies and fresh stock issues exceed the capacity of the local market.

ket. This started to reflect on the secondary market and to harm the investment climate in the country, he said, adding that several shareholders in new companies were unable to honour their debts.

Prices take a dive at AFM

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An official source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, attributed the decline to political reasons, mainly political tension between Jordan on the one hand and Iraq and Syria on the other.

Mr. Abu Hajleh blamed the government for the drop and said any irregular decline in international companies is usually tackled officially.

General George Joulwan of the United States, needs authorisation from NATO ambassadors to pre-position the first elements of the peacekeeping force. He could get the green light on Tuesday, diplomats say.

Prince Ra'd reviews tourism projects and quake-relief efforts

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, the Regent, on Monday visited the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and discussed tourism projects with Minister of Tourism Abdul Ilah Al Khatib and senior officials.

The Regent, who was briefed on the ministry's plans and projects, called on the ministry to offer the residents living near the tourism and archaeological sites priority in employment in jobs related to tourism projects.

He said that tourism industry could be used to promote economic and social development.

gical monitoring stations in the Kingdom and that they send regular reports to the NRA head office.

Dr. Daghestani said the NRA was calling for the application of the quake resistance building codes which were adopted by the Royal Scientific Society and the Ministry of Public Works in the early 1980s.

He said repeated calls for in the application of these codes fell on deaf ears.

Ekeus, on Iraq mission, says every issue will be reviewed

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Senior U.N. envoy Rolf Ekeus said Monday he would hold talks here with Iraqi officials about all aspects of dismantling Baghdad of its programmes for weapons of mass destruction.

"I'm here to continue my discussions with the Iraqi government," Mr. Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM), told reporters after arriving in Baghdad.

Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990. The former Swedish diplomat said last week that Baghdad had declared that the weapons of mass destruction "were destroyed secretly as they were produced secretly."

Mr. Ekeus has accused Baghdad of hiding part of its germ warfare and chemical weapons arsenal as well as of resuming imports of equipment to make missiles but without informing U.N. experts.

Asked by reporters here whether he was seeking missing information, Mr. Ekeus replied: "I will discuss this with the government later on."

Under U.N. resolutions ending the 1991 Gulf war to free Kuwait, Iraq must destroy its nuclear, biological, chemical and longer-range ballistic weapons and hand over all details about them before the oil embargo can be lifted.

Bosnian Serbs press push against Dayton peace deal

SARAJEVO (R) — United Nations officials said on Monday Serbs around Sarajevo were distrustful of a peace accord but the United States ruled out renegotiating the agreement ending four years of war.

"There has been so much hostility and so much hatred that I don't think they'll be taking chances. They will simply leave."

The first elements of the NATO-led force due to enforce the peace accord could arrive in the former Yugoslavia at the end of this week, the top U.S. military official said.

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1 killed, dozens injured in Egypt election violence

CAIRO (Agencies) — One man was killed, at least 20 people injured and about 180 arrested in the last two days of campaigning for Wednesday's parliamentary elections, newspapers and party officials said on Monday.

The opposition daily Al Wafd said Abdul Aziz Shehata Sayed was killed and 20 others injured in clashes on Sunday between supporters of two candidates from the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) running for the Sharkia constituency.

The death toll from the election campaign now stands at three, compared to 10 in the last elections in 1990. Last week, a man was killed in similar brawls in the Mediterranean town of Damietta. In a family dispute over which candidate to vote for, another man was killed and two injured in a southern Egyptian town.

The government newspaper Al Akhbar said police arrested 126 people, including independent candidate Maftouz Hilmi, in the north-western province of Gharbia, for taking part in an illegal march on Saturday.

Some 4,040 candidates are competing for the 444 seats in parliament, compared to 2,676 in the 1990 elections, which were boycotted by the majority of Egypt's opposition groups.

Analysts expect the NDP, headed by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, to win the 1995 polls by more than 80 per cent, with the opposition parties expected to gain only 40 to 60 seats.

The ruling party has regularly won more than two-thirds of all previous parliamentary elections. Such a majority is needed to pass any legislation and to elect the president.

Political experts say the only party with the backing to compete with the NDP is the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, which has more than 100 candidates standing as independents.

Police arrested more than 50 supporters of the group late on Sunday in Cairo and Giza provinces on charges ranging from chanting subversive slogans to inciting public disorder.

A statement faxed from the Brotherhood said police jailed 30 supporters of candidate and group spokesman Mamoun Hodeibi during a rally in the Cairo district of Agouza.

Mr. Hodeibi said security

agents attacked one of his campaign tours and arrested around 30 people.

Mr. Hodeibi said in a statement that he was conducting a "peaceful campaign march, shaking people's hands and reminding them of (his) name" in the Cairo district of Dokki.

"Suddenly a force of central security agents appeared in a number of cars," Mr. Hodeibi said.

"They attacked the march violently with beatings and arrested around 30 of those present, regardless of whether they were part of the procession or just in the street by accident," he said.

Mr. Hodeibi said the act was aimed at "imprisoning as many of my supporters as possible two days before the election" and prevent him from having an observer at the polling station during Wednesday's vote.

Newspapers reported that 20 more supporters were detained in the province of Kafr Al Sheikh. Giza Brotherhood candidate Ali Bateekh told Reuters security forces hauled off three of his supporters at midnight.

The crackdown came a week after a military court sentenced 54 leading Brotherhood figures to prison terms ranging from three to five years.

The verdicts were seen as a last attempt by the government to deal a strong blow to the group prior to the elections.

Mr. Hodeibi hopes a government clampdown on the group this year will trigger more sympathy among voters. State officials and NDP supporters are trying to sully the group's pacifist image by equating it with the militant groups waging a bloody campaign to topple the state.

Later Monday, the Brotherhood said more than a thousand of its members, many of them registered electoral observers, have been arrested over the last 24 hours in the run-up to parliamentary elections.

"The security services have led an arrest campaign and have especially targeted the delegates of Muslim Brotherhood candidates" in the elections, spokesman Hodeibi told AFP.

He noted that the names of the delegates, due to monitor voting for Brotherhood candidates, were registered at police stations.



PALESTINIAN PROTEST: Israeli soldiers escort Palestinian women out of an area where the women joined protests against the seizure by Jewish settlers of Palestinian land near Al Khader in the West Bank. Al Khader residents said the settlers, from the neighbouring colony of Neve Daniel, had occupied 10 hectares of Palestinian land (AFP photo)

Kabulis mop up after deadly bombing attacks by Taliban

KABUL (AFP) — Fruit, meat and cigarette vendors jockey for space in the bustling lane bordered by the high mud walls of traditional Afghan family compounds, while rescuers search frantically for corpses still buried under a nearby mountain of war debris.

Children play happily in the winding lane and nothing seems amiss or unusual in this busy north Kabul neighbourhood, looking more like the film set of a biblical village than a suburb in a 20th century capital.

Yet just hours earlier, 13 locals were killed and scores of others were injured when a massive bomb dropped by high-altitude jets, said by the defence ministry to belong to the Taliban, obliterated a half-square-kilometre patch of the suburb lying only a few metres from the thriving market lane.

It was part of the deadliest air raid yet on the Afghan capital. The area where 10 families had been living just eight hours earlier looked deserted and eerie in the fading winter light. Charred headframes loomed from under piles of masonry, while pieces of shredded clothing and curtains mingled with the lethal shrapnel littering the maze of

foundations and toppled beams littering the ground.

A plastic bucket still containing water swings in the wind over the remains of a well near one of the brown mud and brick homes.

"Again, we have lost friends and family to the machines of war, but we have to keep going and maintain the hope that one day this killing will stop," Aqil Shah, a 42-year-old former factory worker says calmly.

Mr. Shah's stoic pragmatism highlights the peculiar gift Afghans seem to have of getting up and dusting themselves off almost immediately after experiencing suffering and misery that would have torn apart other less hardy people.

At least 39 civilians died in Sunday's peak-hour bombing raid which the government said was the work of the Taliban militia who have since last month been besieging Kabul, which has been left in tatters by 16 years of war.

Yet despite the initial wave of angry recriminations and sounds of wailing mothers and wives near the bomb sites, Kabulis almost immediately began putting their lives back on track, even as teams of rescue workers continued the grisly task of com-

bing the rubble for survivors and more victims.

"I am just happy to be alive," says Khaled, who lived in one of the many houses shattered by Sunday's air raid.

"Next time I may not be so lucky, so I must try to live as normally as possible until the fighting ends or until my turn comes," he added as he scooped up some dusty blankets which seemed to have survived the blast.

"It seems we are meant to fight each other and suffer — we have been doing it for years, so it must be our fate," he added before shuffling down the dirt track leading to the gaping bomb crater.

Residents of houses across the street were meanwhile mopping up pools of blood on their doorsteps and clearing away the jagged remains of their windows. A taxi driver salvaged what he could from the crushed chassis of his aged Russian car.

By dusk two of the main areas hit by the aerial barrage had been sealed off by local residents who returned to their daily routines after establishing which of their neighbours had died and after making sure any orphaned children were given shelter.

Belgium will not deport suspect to Algeria

BRUSSELS (R) — Belgium will not send Ahmad Zaoui, presumed leader of an Algerian extremist network in Europe, back to Algeria because he faces a death penalty there, the Belgian foreign ministry said Monday.

"As long as the situation in Algeria is such that his safety there cannot be guaranteed, it (expulsion to Algeria) has been ruled out," a ministry spokesman said.

Mr. Zaoui, 34, was given a four-year suspended prison sentence on Nov. 20 by an appeal court here for criminal association. He was acquitted in October by a Brussels court of membership of a criminal organisation.

He went on trial with 11 other presumed members of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), one of the most radical of the guerrilla movements seeking to overturn Algeria's military-backed regime.

Mr. Zaoui's lawyer Morte De Raedter said on Sunday that Mr. Zaoui had been sentenced to death in Algeria on July 27, 1993.

Belgian Foreign Minister Kohnen Vandae Lanotte pledged Belgium would uphold "current international guidelines not to send someone back to a country where their life will be in danger."

However, the Belgian foreign ministry is studying the possibility of finding another country where he can be expelled after a request for political asylum was turned down.

Mr. Zaoui and his colleagues were arrested in March when police netted weapons, ammunition, false identity papers, medical and radio equipment and fundamentalist literature for propaganda purposes.

Belgian authorities believe he is one of the GIA's leaders in Europe. Reuters erroneously reported on Sunday that Mr. Zaoui had been convicted by a Belgian court of belonging to the GIA.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bahrain court upholds death sentence

NICOSIA (AFP) — An appeals court in Bahrain on Monday upheld a death sentence against a Shiite Muslim accused of stabbing and stoning to death a police officer during anti-government unrest earlier this year, lawyers said. Issa Ahmad Qambar, 27, was among 10 Shiites accused of murdering Lieutenant Ibrahim Al Saidi, on March 30 in Nuhrat, a mainly Shiite village southeast of the Bahraini capital Manama, lawyers said by telephone. Eight of the 10 were given jail terms and another was acquitted when the lower court issued its ruling on July 5. The appeals court upheld a life term against another of the accused, but commuted one life term to five years in jail. Two who had been condemned to 10 years in prison saw their sentence reduced to five years each. Three people jailed for five years were acquitted, and the court also upheld the earlier acquittal of the 10th person. At least 12 people died in a five-month wave of unrest against the government which was sparked by the arrest of a Shiite cleric in December.

Sudan to resume repatriation of Ethiopian

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan will resume repatriating Ethiopian refugees in the country during the first week of December, Sudanese refugee officials said Monday. About 300,000 refugees who fled unrest in neighbouring Ethiopia remain in Sudan, mostly in the east of the country. Voluntary repatriation operations began last year but stalled because of what officials here said was the failure by Ethiopian authorities to prepare sufficient reception facilities and the lack of funds for this purpose. About 20,000 Ethiopian refugees were moved back home with help from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) before the operation was suspended. Sudanese television said the country's minister of state and commissioner for refugees, Ahsan Al Ghabshawi, met Sunday with President Omar Al Beshir to brief him on a meeting on the refugee problem in Al Shwak town Saturday by representatives from the Sudanese and Ethiopian governments, the UNHCR and non-governmental organizations. The Sudanese president said his government would continue to abide by international conventions on refugees and felt "voluntary repatriation" was the best solution to the problem, the television said.

Bomb explodes at Baghdad office of Iranian group

NICOSIA (R) — A bomb exploded outside the Baghdad offices of the Iranian opposition Mujahadeen-e-Khalq group on Sunday, the group said on Monday. The group said in a statement sent to Reuters a car bomb rocked the group's offices in Andalus Square in the Iraqi capital late on Sunday night. The blast damaged surrounding buildings but caused no casualties, the statement added. The Iraq-based group has reported several attacks this year, including one in July in which three of its members were shot dead in a highway attack in Baghdad. There was no immediate Iraqi confirmation of the attack. The Mujahadeen-e-Khalq organisation, which opposes the clerical-led government of Tehran, has its headquarters in Baghdad and several bases near the Iranian border.

Turkey protests to Bonn over talks with Kurds

ANKARA (R) — Turkey on Monday said it had protested to Bonn over a meeting between a German intelligence official and the leader of the rebel Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK), saying it was counterproductive to efforts to end PKK attacks in Germany. "As soon as we had information of the meeting... we had high-level demarches with the German government," Foreign Ministry spokesman Omer Akbel told an English-language news briefing. "We related to them our displeasure and disapproval." An aide to chancellor Helmut Kohl confirmed on Saturday a meeting between Bernd Schmiedbauer, Mr. Kohl's intelligence service coordinator, and PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in recent months. "No matter what the reason for justification might be, we strongly disapprove of such contacts and we sincerely believe that they are completely counterproductive," Mr. Akbel said. "We have always said that it is not admissible to have talks or contacts with the terrorist (PKK) organisation."

Israeli army may enlist help from Muslim clerics

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Islamic clerics could be appointed to officiate at the funerals of Muslim soldiers serving with the Israeli army, a religious affairs ministry spokesman said Monday. After Amar told AFP the proposal had been made to the weekly cabinet meeting on Sunday by Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetret after a row broke out over the funeral of Bedouin soldier who died on Wednesday after a training accident. Muslim clerics had refused to take part in the funeral of Alaa Al Naim, 19, branding him as a "Zionist" soldier for serving in the army. Mr. Shetret proposed that a Muslim religious official be appointed in the military to coordinate a network of "imams around the country to be in charge of funerals in cases involving the deaths of Muslim soldiers," Mr. Amar said. Mr. Naim was finally buried at the Nazareth Muslim cemetery in a military ceremony according to conditions set out by an imam, but without any religious officiation, the Jerusalem Post reported. Chief of Staff Amnon Shabak pledged to his parents when he paid a condolence visit on Sunday that he would try to solve the problems. "If we don't know how to honour the dead, we won't know how to respect the living," he said.

Fundamentalists enter Egyptian polls in force

CAIRO (AFP) — Muslim fundamentalist candidates are running in Wednesday's parliamentary elections in force, despite a government crackdown, in a bid to lead the Egyptian opposition.

The Islamic bloc, led by the banned Muslim Brotherhood along with its Labour and Liberal party allies, stands as the ruling National Democratic Party's (NDP) leading rival in the vote, fielding 223 candidates.

But the election comes less than a week after a harsh blow to the Brotherhood: 54 of its members were sentenced last Thursday for up to five years in prison and police closed down its unofficial headquarters.

"With these inhuman verdicts, the authorities are trying to scare off voters and to muzzle us as well as all

the opposition," Brotherhood spokesman Mamoun, Al Hodeibi said after the military court rulings.

"But we are determined to redouble our efforts in our election campaign," Mr. Hodeibi said.

The month-long trials of the group's members knocked some of its most hopeful candidates out of the race, but Brotherhood leaders remain confident of regaining a foothold in parliament.

Islamic candidates won 36 seats in 1987 but boycotted the last elections five years ago.

"Our deputies might not be able to change everything, but at least they could limit the domination of the NDP," Ahmad Seif Al Islam Hassan Al Banna, the son of the Brotherhood's founder, told

AFP.

"The majority cannot defy the opinion of the minority forever. The opposition has the duty to stop tyranny by facing up to the government when it takes anti-democratic moves," Mr. Hodeibi said.

"The arrest of our best members will affect our representation in parliament," he conceded. "The police campaign targeted our strongest candidates."

"The regime is afraid of having the FIS victory in Algeria happen in Egypt," Mr. Banna said, referring to 1991 polls in Algeria which were cancelled when the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) looked poised to win.

Last week, six Brotherhood members were sentenced to five years of hard labour.

The rulings in two military trials came at the end of a year-long police crackdown against the group, which although banned in 1954 had been tolerated by the state since the mid-1970s.

During its long truce with the authorities, the Brotherhood successfully swept elections in several professional unions in the 1990s, demonstrating its active voter support.

But since it has no legal status, it is not allowed to run as a political party and its candidates in the parliamentary vote can only be recognised by their slogan: "Islam is the solution."

"We want to be governed by Islam. Religion is anchored in the hearts of the Egyptian people," Mr. Banna said.

Brotherhood candidates have focused on poorer constituencies, binging their campaigns on social issues while distancing themselves from the militant violence which the authorities have accused them of backing.

"We want to build an ideal society. Islam is the best economic and ideological model to reform society and achieve happiness for mankind," said the son of the late founder Hassan Al Banna.

The Brotherhood calls for "nationalist capitalism, based firstly on Egyptian capital, estimated at \$80 billion, and then capital from Arab or Islamic countries," he said.

"We are against violence and anarchy. Change must be made democratically. Why should we resort to violence?"

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PROGRAMME TWO	
14:00	Captain Planet
14:30	M.A.N.T.I.S.
15:15	Run the Gamble
16:00	The Adventures of the Black Stallion
16:30	Sky Trainers
17:00	Fractals
17:30	Series — Fruits & Legumes
18:00	Doc — Crociere a la Decouverte
19:00	News in French
19:30	Magazine — Ustman
19:50	News in English
20:30	You Bet Your Life
20:50	The Secret of the Treasure Island
21:15	The Boki and the Beautiful
21:45	True Blue
22:00	News in English
22:25	Feature Film: "Gun Smoke"
23:00	Never Come Back
PRAYER TIMES	
06:00	Fajr
06:19	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:25	Dhuhr
14:14	Asr
16:30	Maghrib
17:57	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church	Swetketh, Tel. 810740
Assumption of God Church, Tel.	632783
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	Church of the Assumption Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	Terrace Church Tel. 622566
Church of the Assumption Tel.	623541
Anglican Church Tel. 628266	Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.	775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	Assyrian International Church Tel. 625256
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.	824328
German-speaking Evangelical	Church Tel. 964567
The Church of Jesus Christ of	Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	The Evangelical Local Church in
Amman	Tel. 811295
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Temperatures are expected to drop slightly with winds easterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	
Amman	2/14
Aqaba	9/21
Deserts	0/16
Jordan Valley	7/21

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR	
Yesterday's high temperatures:	Amman 14, Aqaba 20, Humidity readings: Amman 57 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Mikhles Halasah	819220
Dr. Fayed Dabbas	759155
Dr. Arafat Al Ashbah	602507
Dr. Muntashir Al Qatani	779999
Pharmacy pharmacy	778336
Al Asana pharmacy	637055
Nairoukh pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yasoun pharmacy	644945
Shimouh pharmacy	676660
Nairoukh pharmacy	623672
Najib pharmacy	847632
IRBID:	
Dr. Al Al Omari	272032
Aqaba pharmacy	(—)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Abdul Karim Khazashash	953023
Khalidh pharmacy	954417
EMERGENCIES	
Flood Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	617101
Bank Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	893700
Public Security Department	630321
Amman Municipality	605800
Hotel Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	897467
Complaints	787111
Amman Municipality	605800
Telephone Information	121
(directory assistance)	010230
Overseas Calls	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	771111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	660100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussain Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644281/5
Alkheh Maternity, J. Amn	640411/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Malhas, J. Amman	636140
Shamsan Hospital	607071
Shamsan Hospital	609131
University Hospital	943045
Al-Musharraf Hospital	677221/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/5
Islamic, Al-Muhajreen	777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Amman	775112/26
Aray, Marja	801811/15
Queen Alia Hospital	666100
Amal Hospital	607135
The Arab Centre for Heart and	Special Surgery
	865199
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)983323
Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)900560
Al Hikmah Modern Hospital	(09)989533
IBDQ:	
Princess Basmah Hospital	(02)255555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)272725
The Al Nafes Hospital	(02)471700
FOR THE TRAVELLER	
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
06:15	Jeddah (add) (RJ)
07:30	Damascus (RJ)
07:50	Aqaba (RJ)
08:25	Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05	Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:20	Beirut (RJ)
10:45	Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
10:50	Cairo (RJ)
10:55	London (RJ)
11:15	Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
12:10	Frankfurt (YP)
12:15	Rome (AZ)
14:35	Munich, Aleppo (YP)
17:30	Dubai (EK)
20:10	Beirut (ME)
23:30	Aden (DY)
00:25	Bocharat (RO)
01:10	London (KJ)
DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
06:15	Beirut (RJ)
06:30	Rome (AZ)
06:50	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:05	Geneva, Toronto (RJ)
11:45	Cairo, Brussels (RJ)
12:00	Paris, Brugges (RJ)
12:05	London (RJ)
12:15	Cairo (RJ)
12:25	Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
13:35	Larnaca (RJ)
14:35	Jeddah (RJ)
14:45	Damascus (RJ)
21:00	Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:05	Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
06:00	Damascus, Paris (AF)
14:10	Frankfurt

Seminar tackles reporting on corruption, credibility of media

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — While some Jordanian journalists believe that laws should be amended to guarantee them more protection and access to information, particularly in their reporting of cases of corruption, former government officials pointed to what they called the dangers in nonprofessional reporting.

At a seminar entitled "Towards a Strategy to Resist Corruption," organised by the ministries of administrative development and justice, the role of the media in the battle against corruption, was discussed by media experts, lawyers and government officials.

The three groups emphasised the importance of the media in acting as a watchdog and discussed ways in which it can contribute to uncovering corruption in the country.

But one former cabinet minister warned that a "corrupt media is far more dangerous than corruption (itself) in any other institution."

Former Deputy Prime Minister Said al-Fal lashed out at columnists for allegedly accepting bribes from sources with interests in influencing public opinion. "We have corrupt columnists who are paid from certain sources," said Dr. al-Fal, adding that Jordan's media institution should "put an end" to such practices.

In defence of journalists working for the official media, Secretary General of the Parliament Hukam Khair said "fear is deeply rooted in the sub-conscious of the media people, who are frustrated and treated as second class by their superiors."

Mr. Khair cited as an example official news reports on public service issues, saying that the reporters tend to impose self-censorship even on issues which are neither sensitive nor controversial.

According to Mr. Khair, if communication between official media reporters and their supervisors is not improved, self-censorship, fear and frustration will

stand in the way of revealing cases of corruption.

Mr. Khair said that because "television and radio are the most important information bodies in Jordan," and that these two institutions are owned by the government, a board of directors from both the private and public sectors, should be established in order for them to become "more objective in their reporting."

As the discussion turned to the issue of professionalism, participants stressed the need for proper training of journalists on the different types of reporting, especially investigative reporting which, they agreed, is vital to any story about corruption.

"The establishment of an advanced training centre for media people is extremely essential, and should be financed by both the private and public sectors," Mr. Khair said.

Participants concurred that in order to help the media to fully participate in the democratisation process, editors and

reporters should develop their skills by attending courses at well-established radio and television stations as well as newspapers abroad.

Reporting on corruption in the printed press should become more professional, the participants said.

According to Mahmoud Sharif, former minister of information, and a founder of Al-Dustour Arabic daily, "sensational headlines, irresponsible comments, and stories which lack evidence badly damage the credibility of the press."

At the conclusion of the seminar, representatives of the Ministry of Administrative Development told the Jordan Times that further study of the comprehensive topic of forming a government strategy to deter corruption, which would include the media's role, will be conducted. The aim, they said, is to present the results of such a study to the cabinet, in the hope of adopting a national strategy.

'Efforts being made to create right climate for job-seekers'

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Labour is trying to create opportune climates for job seekers to find employment and at the same time is trying to better control the local labour market, Minister of Labour Nader Abul Sha'er said Monday.

In an address to an audience attending a ceremony to graduate a group of 36 men and women workers, who attended a 10-day training seminar on workers' education, the minister said vocational training centres and the Labour Culture Institute which held the training seminar, were intensifying their efforts to help job seekers.

The minister said the Labour Culture Institute will soon be enlarged to become a full-fledged corporation responsible for organising cultural training courses to Jordanian workers.

Mazen Ma'aitah, Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions secretary general, said the institute has been instrumental in providing education to workers and in promoting their standards.

He said there was need for maintaining close cooperation between workers, employers and the con-



Minister of Labour Nader Abul Sha'er Monday graduates participants of a 10-day training seminar on workers' education (Petra photo)

cerned government authorities to promote industry in the Kingdom.

He added that industry creates jobs and helps deal with the unemployment problem.

Graduates listened to lectures from the Jordanian Labour Law, legislation and regulations pertaining to the labour market, the Social Security Corporation, unions' rights and

dates, the labour movement and social and economic plans undertaken by the government to deal with poverty and unemployment.

Unemployment soared dramatically in the wake of the Gulf crisis of 1991 with the return of 350,000 Jordanian expatriates from the Gulf states.

Foreign workers in the past summer months were

estimated at 250,000 of whom only 42,000 had work permits prompting the government to introduce strict measures to control the labour market to help the unemployed find jobs.

Jordan's workforce is estimated at 865,000 out of a population of four million.

At least 150,000 are unemployed, according to official figures.

Private sector delegation leaves for Barcelona conference

AMMAN (Petra) — Leaving for Barcelona Monday to take part in the economic meetings of the Euro-Mediterranean conference, Bassam Saket, who is board chairman of the Jordan Cement Factories Company, said he would seek European support for Jordan's economy.

Dr. Saket said this could be achieved by allowing more of the Kingdom's products to be marketed in Europe which currently absorbs 52 per cent of the Mediterranean countries' exports.

According to Dr. Saket the European Union has already pledged \$12 billion in the form of financial assistance to Mediterranean nations between 1995 and 1999, of which \$600 million

will be spent during 1996.

In a pre-departure statement, Dr. Saket said the economic meetings will tackle topics related to social and economic strategies for the 21st century and the creation of free trade zones by the year 2010 as well as subjects pertaining to trade and foreign investments and European Mediterranean partnership agreements.

Representing the private sector at the conference are Dr. Saket and Haidar Murad, who is President of the Amman Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Saket and Mr. Murad will take part in a discussion over the establishment of a new Euro-Mediterranean forum.

The forum will undertake



Bassam Saket

to promote trade and economic relations between Europe and the Arab states. Jordan's official delegation to the Barcelona con-



Haidar Murad

ference is led by Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and includes officials representing several government departments.

Ministry prepares national water strategy

MA'IN (Petra) — The Ministry of Water and Irrigation has set up ad hoc technical committees to prepare a national water policy and plans to implement such a policy, Secretary General Qusai Quteishat said Monday.

Mr. Quteishat said the policy aims to tackle water problems facing Jordan up to the year 2035 so as to replace the national plan prepared in 1977.

Speaking at a three-day workshop on cooperation between the public and private sectors in the water and sewerage sectors

organised by the ministry and the World Bank Economic Development Institute at Ashtar Hotel in Maan, Mr. Quteishat said the main aim of the strategy will be to strike a balance between available water sources and demand by the populace as well as to meet citizens' needs during the summer season and drought years.

At the present time, Mr. Quteishat said, the ministry is conducting technical studies in cooperation with foreign organisations on means of exploiting water sources in Wadi Al Mujib,

Al Hissa and Al Disi Basin in southern Jordan as well as desalinating underground water.

These studies are also dealing with means of recycling waste water to be used in irrigation and ways to replenish underground water sources.

The ministry secretary general said the ministry was also preparing a programme to monitor water sources in terms of quantity and quality and preparing a database on these sources.

He said the ministry has already embarked on a pioneering plan to improve

management of water projects aimed at replacing water canals in the Jordan Valley with pipes and encourage farmers to adopt modern irrigation methods.

He added that the plan also entails replacing old water networks and improving the performance of waste water treatment plants, especially the one in Khirbet Al Sumra.

Mr. Quteishat revealed that the ministry has also started a study on industries polluting underground water sources to help the ministry combat such pollution.

WHAT'S GOING ON

SHORT STORY RECITAL

* Recital of short stories by Oklah Haddad at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art, Gardens Street at 6.30 p.m.

* Photographs and paintings by Ann O'Neill and Anne Sears at the British Council (until Dec. 3)

* Works by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orfali Art Gallery.

EXHIBITIONS

* Abstract art by Iraqi artist Samira Abdul Wahab at Ab'ad Art Gallery, Mecca Street (until Dec. 2)

* Plastic art by Abdul Raheem Wakid at Alia Art Gallery, Jabal Amman (until Dec. 2)

* Annual fall exhibition "Khawater" at the Jordan River Designs, (Tel. 613081/2) until Dec. 1.

* Works by Dodi Taba'a entitled "Variations Graphiques 93-95" at the French Cultural Centre.

* Sculptures & paintings by Iraqi Artist Ismail Fattah, and a retrospective exhibition of sculptures & drawings by Mona Saudi at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh.

* Metal works by Ammar Khammash at Liwan, off Wadi Saqra Street. Also displaying all kinds of handicrafts. (Tel. 699141).

NEWS IN BRIEF

Regent congratulates Lebanon, Mauritania

AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid, the Regent, Monday sent a cable to Lebanese President Elias Hrawi, congratulating him on his country's independence day. Prince Ra'ad wished Mr. Hrawi continued good health and happiness and the Lebanese people further progress and prosperity. Prince Ra'ad sent a similar cable to Mauritania President Mu'awia Wild Sidi Ahmad Al Taye to congratulate him on his country's national day.

Directors instructed to abide by office hours

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Monday issued a communique instructing directors of government departments and civil servants to be available at their departments during office hours. The Prime Minister said all civil servants can leave their departments during office hours only after obtaining a leave permission from their superiors. The communique was issued after complaints by the Administrative Control and Inspection Bureau that some of the directors leave their departments during office hours, thus causing delays for citizens who are doing paper work at government departments.

Foreign media club opens doors

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's first organisation grouping non-Jordanian journalists based in the Kingdom, formally registered as the Foreign Correspondents' Club, has opened the door for association of journalists working for foreign media.

The club, which currently has 21 members, held its first general assembly meeting on Saturday and elected Randa Habib, bureau chief of the French news agency, Agence France Presse (AFP), as president, Kumar Malhotra of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as secretary, and Jorg Kaminski of the German ARD as treasurer.

"The club's objective is to serve as a forum for social, cultural and non-political activities for foreign correspondents based in Jordan," said Ms. Habib.

"It will arrange meetings with local and visiting officials and arrange conferences etc. along the lines that its counterparts in the region and elsewhere do."

The organisation has set

up a special window for Jordanian journalists working for foreign media organisations to join through creating "associate memberships," said Ms. Habib.

While full membership is open to non-Jordanian nationals working on a fixed contract for any media organisation which is not state-controlled, associate membership is accessible to "all other journalists working for the foreign media who do not meet the requirements of full membership."

Ms. Habib, who said she expected the total number of members to eventually reach 100, noted that the idea to set up a foreign correspondents' club as a "meeting point for foreign journalists in Jordan" was mooted four years but could not be realised because of legal hurdles.

The way was cleared in February when a group of foreign correspondents raised the issue with His Majesty King Hussein during an informal meeting.

"The King was very encouraging and he immediately instructed the Ministry of Information to

facilitate the establishment of a foreign correspondents' club," recalled Ms. Habib.

Subsequently, the proposal was legalised through the Press and Publications Law and endorsed by a Royal Decree.

The Foreign Correspondents' Club has set a nominal fee as membership "to cover the cost of paperwork," and "members might be asked to pay the actual expenses of hosting meetings and other activities," said Ms. Habib.

She added that the organisation was now looking for and to receiving applications for full and associate memberships.

Jordan hosted a relatively large number of foreign journalists in the early and mid-80s before the number declined.

The number has picked up again in the wake of the Middle East peace process and other developments which have projected the Kingdom as one of the key centres in the context of regional politics and economic development.

China's 'destructive assault' drill is 'a warning' to Taiwan separatists

HONG KONG (AFP) — China's show of military might directly across the strait from Taiwan is a direct warning to the pro-independence lobby there of what could be in store, according to a senior adviser to Beijing.

In a front-page report here Monday, the Beijing-fluited Wen Wei Po daily said the joint army, navy and air force exercises held in the past few days, came under China's "destructive assault" warfare strategy, and marked the escalation of such drills following Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States in June.

"The exercises this time show the Chinese government's resolute determination to oppose and halt pro-Taiwan independence, especially to those who thought they could gain support

from foreign powers to carry out the so-called 'democracy-procedure'," warned Xin Qi, director of the Beijing-based All-China Taiwan Research Centre.

The weekend's main evening television news showed a virtual invasion rehearsal: Blanket missile firing, huge manoeuvres backed by warplanes and helicopters, amphibious vehicles landing on beaches, troops being parachuted into a mock battle.

"It is a serious warning to those political forces who believe that they can automatically split Taiwan away from China," Mr. Xin added.

Mr. Xin cited remarks by Chinese senior leader Deng Xiaoping and President Jiang Zemin that "only in such special situations was it necessary to resort to a ooo-peaceful approach in

order to resolve China's unity problem."

The Wen Wei Po report noted that the military exercises were organised for the first time to cover the "Nanjing war zone" and not according to any military region as in the past.

It said the war zone was aimed at ensuring the easy manoeuvre and reinforcement of forces from other military regions including the Nanjing military region-controlled East China Fleet and Air Forces.

China's latest sabre rattling came in the run-up to the first of two crucial elections for Taiwanese voters. Parliamentary polls will be held next month and the presidential election in March.

China and Taiwan have been separated by their rival claims to sovereignty since the end of the civil war in

1949. Beijing has always considered the Nationalist island a renegade province waiting to rejoin the mainland.

The mainland has repeatedly staged military exercises in Taiwan's vicinity this year to show its anger at what it considers moves by the nationalists to use their growing economic power as a launching pad for an independence bid.

On Oct. 18, news programmes showed Mr. Jiang, who is also chairman of the Central Military Commission, watching ground and sea exercises.

The Taiwan bourse took a temporary dive after war games in July and August. Those exercises were taken as a warning after President Lee's private visit to the United States which earned him massive publicity.



Condom ad involving Diana raises protests

OSLO — An advertisement that used Princess Diana's admission of a adultery to promote condom sales stirred protests from Britain and furious debate in Norway. The newspaper ad showed a photograph of the British princess, wearing white, on one page. On the opposite page was the headline: "It's hard to see on the outside whether someone has had casual sex with casual partners. It happens in the best of families. One can never be too careful," said the ad for RSU Condoms, published by the Oslo tabloid Dagbladet Friday. The ad appeared the day after Norwegian television aired a British Broadcasting Corp. interview in which the princess admitted to having been unfaithful to her husband, Prince Charles. Norwegian newspapers reported Saturday that Buckingham Palace was furious about the advertisement, which used Princess Diana's picture without permission. "The palace has asked the British embassy in Norway to consider possible reactions," the Oslo newspaper Verdens Gang quoted palace press officer Charles Anson as saying. The man behind the campaign, Ingebrigt Steen-Jensen of the JBR agency in Oslo, said the ad was motivated by the need to promote the use of condoms to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted disease. "As we see it, it was Diana who made her life above and below the belt the No. 1 topic of conversation this week," he said. "She must have known that her statements would be used commercially around the world." The photograph shows the two-page ad (AFP photo)

Man sues saying quake reveals builders' secret

TOKYO (R) — A man whose home was hit by the January earthquake in Kobe, western Japan, wondered why the new, three-storey building suffered so much damage. On checking the pillars and walls, house owner Shunichi Seike said he found they had been put up in 1938. He said he paid 60 million yen (\$594,000) for the house in 1990 believing it to be brand new. Mr. Seike, a 37-year-old machinery salesman, filed a 75 million yen (\$742,000) lawsuit Monday against the builders at Kobe District Court. Court officials said thousands of buildings were toppled in the Jan. 17 earthquake, which killed more than 6,000 people. It was Japan's worst earthquake disaster since 1923.

Chinese star loses state-supported post

BEIJING (AP) — Pop star Wei Wei has been dismissed from her state-supported position with the Central Dance and Singing Troupe because she broke rules and isn't sorry, a Chinese newspaper reported Monday. Wei Wei, who has sold millions of albums in China, has been reported to be learning English and preparing to make a bid for international fame. She has been invited to perform at the Olympics in Atlanta next year. The report in the Beijing Youth Daily said Wei Wei kept 100,000 yuan (\$12,000), half the ticket sales from two concerts in Shenzhen last year, when she should have shared it with the 80 people involved in the concert. The newspaper noted that was 10 times the annual salary of a top-level performer in China. It also said she gave performances in Shanghai and Canton without permission. The report did not specify whether other rules were broken. It said she did not believe she had done anything wrong and objected to the troupe's attempts to discipline her. Wei Wei is married to American composer and pianist Michael Smith and spends part of her time in the United States.

Bulging crotch yields lingerie trope in Manila

MANILA (R) — A suspicious bulge in the crotch gave a Filipino shopper away. Twenty-year-old Norbin Soler was inching his way out of a Manila department store when security guards noticed an unnatural swell in his crotch and grabbed him, police said. A search of the suspicious area yielded five different styles of brassieres worth more than 1,000 pesos (\$38), they said. Soler is being held on theft charges.

Beatles return with secret messages

LONDON (AP) — Kcabe seltaeb ebl. The Beatles are back — backwards? Nearly three decades after fans thought Paul was dead, a BBC producer said the three surviving Beatles are again recording secret messages backwards into a song. Simon Clifford said he heard John Lennon say "turned out nice again" backwards at the end of the Beatles reunion number Free As A Bird. Clifford first noticed the phrase while watching the video, which concludes with a man in 1940s dress mounting a stage and playing a ukulele. The song closes with a ukulele. George Formby, a popular ukulele-playing music hall comedian from England's north — like the Beatles — used to end his act with the phrase, "turned out nice again." Formby died in 1961. "I regard it as being very spooky, almost like a subliminal message to fans," Clifford told listeners.

Army called in to battle Dhaka inferno

DHAKA (R) — Soldiers were called in to help firemen put out a devastating fire that destroyed nearly 2,500 shops Monday in one of Dhaka's largest markets, witnesses said.

They said hundreds of soldiers joined the fight after Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and opposition leader Sheikh Hasina visited the still-raging fire.

Fire brigade officials said the fire broke out at Bangabazar Market around 6.30 a.m. (0030 GMT) and engulfed the whole market

in about an hour.

"The fire spread too quickly and we are not sure if it was caused by accident or sabotage," one fire brigade official said.

Rescuers said at 1 p.m. (0700 GMT) they had yet to find any dead or injured persons but a search was continuing.

"It's one of the worst fires in this city. The losses would run into millions of dollars," one Dhaka City Corporation official said.

Witnesses said the shops at the Bangabazar Market

went up in flames before firemen could enter it. The market is famous for its abundant supply of imported old garments and local factory rejects that attract buyers from Bangladesh and neighbouring countries.

Most shops in the market were made of wood but had no roofs, making it more difficult for firemen to spray water on the blaze, they said. Narrow lanes also hampered firefighting efforts.

U.S. aides concerned by Aristide's hazy plans

PORT-AU-PRINCE (R) — U.S. officials expressed concern about Haiti Sunday following a string of violent outbursts and remarks by President Jean-Bertrand Aristide suggesting he may not leave office as scheduled in February.

"We're watching with concern some of the developments in Haiti," Defense Secretary William Perry told the CBS Television programme Face the Nation. "I think the situation in Haiti is ambiguous, but I do not consider in any sense that it is unravelling."

The Haitian capital has been rocked by a series of fatal clashes between police and gangs in recent days, sparking local concerns about the country's fragile democratic institutions.

Adding to the uncertainty are lingering doubts whether the Dec. 17 presidential election will take place as scheduled. By law, Mr. Aristide is not allowed to run for a second term.

When he was returned to power in October 1994 by a U.S.-led multinational force, Mr. Aristide made a promise to U.S. President Bill Clinton that he would respect the Haitian constitution and leave office when his term ended in Feb. 7, 1996.

Mr. Aristide has given no indication of whether he might try to postpone the presidential election, but his comments are likely to stall the campaign. With less than a month remaining, there has been little campaigning by the 14 declared candidates.

But populist forces are calling on Mr. Aristide to stay another three years in office to make up for the time he spent in exile after a 1991 military coup. Those calls picked up steam last week after delegates at a government-sponsored conference passed a non-binding resolution urging Mr. Aristide not to step down.

"You asked me what I think. I think as you do," Mr. Aristide told hundreds of delegates at the presidential palace Friday in response to their proposal that he extend his term by three years.

"Nonetheless, the second part of my answer is that I think as do many people who are not here... neither myself nor you make a whole," Mr. Aristide said.

Mr. Aristide made it clear he has not made a final decision on whether to remain in office and that he would listen to the views of the private sector and political leaders.

Mr. Clinton's National Security Adviser Anthony Lake said he expected Mr. Aristide to keep his oft-repeated pledges to step down in February.

Ivorian ruling party wins election

ABIDJAN (R) — President Henri Koina Bedie's ruling Democratic Party (PDCI) won Ivory Coast's second multi-party general election Monday, after securing an absolute majority in the new parliament.

Partial results from Sunday's poll, officially posted outside the Interior Ministry, gave Mr. Bedie's party 97 of the 175 seats in the National Assembly.

The party, which has monopolised power since independence from France in 1960, was on course for an emphatic win. The opposition, which held only 17 seats in the outgoing parliament, had a combined total of 13.

Sunday's polling was peaceful, in contrast to October's turbulent presidential election, even though the two main opposition leaders were prevented from standing and some of their supporters had problems voting.

The main opposition boycotted the Oct. 22 election, which Mr. Bedie won easily. Political and ethnic clashes before and after the poll killed at least 35 people.

Mr. Bedie had urged Ivory Coast's 3.8 million or so registered voters to back his party.

"I have voted for a majority for progress," he told

state television Sunday as he voted in his home town of Daoukro.

Ivory Coast, the world's leading cocoa producer, is banking on a reputation for stability to boost investment and economic revival. The election process will conclude with municipal polls on Dec. 17.

Partial results showed the Rally Of the Republics, formed by disenchanted members of the ruling party after Mr. Bedie took over on founding President Felix Houphouet-Boigny's death in 1993, had won at least eight seats in its first electoral test.

The Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), which spearheaded the campaign that forced multi-party politics on Mr. Houphouet-Boigny in 1990, had five, the results showed. Political analysts said the major opposition parties had diluted their support by standing against one another. In several districts the combined vote of the FPI and RDR candidates was more than that of the winning PDCI candidate.

Early results suggested a turnout of around 50 per cent.

Opposition leaders, who lifted their boycott in return for a revision of voter lists, expressed reservations about the poll.

"This year it is a case of

fraud by electoral census. Many of our militants have not been able to register to vote," FPI leader Laurent Gbagbo told Reuters Sunday.

The government has postponed voting for three seats around the FPI bastion of Gagnoa — including (Gbagbo's — until migrant farmers from Mr. Bedie's Baoule tribe, who fled in October, return.

RDR leader Djany Kobina, barred by a disputed new electoral law after failing to prove he had an Ivorian parent, echoed Gbagbo's concern. He did not vote, fearing further problems.

Around 200 foreign election observers monitored the election but declined immediate comment. Twenty-nine parties took part.

Mr. Bedie easily defeated a minor opposition candidate in the October election. He had governed until then as constitutional successor to Mr. Houphouet-Boigny, who founded the ruling party.

Ivory Coast has a population of 14 million people but as in the presidential poll the new code denied the vote to migrants from neighbouring countries — a departure from polling practice under Mr. Houphouet-Boigny.

Kashmiri Muslim leader appeals for hostages' release

SRINAGAR, India (AFP) — Shabir Shah, the most prominent leader of the Muslim separatist movement in the Indian state of Kashmir, appealed Monday to the kidnappers of four Western tourists to release the hostages.

"Set the four guests free immediately," Mr. Shah said in this summer capital of the strife-torn northern state, addressing the kidnappers through an interview with AFP. "It is inhuman to keep them for such a long time."

"If you (the kidnappers) are fighting to oust India from Kashmir as you claim, then let them go in the broader interest of the freedom struggle," he said. Britons Paul Wells, 23, and Keith Mangan, 33, American Don Hutchings, 42, and German Dirk Hasert, 26, were kidnapped by the previously unknown

Muslim separatist group Al-Faran while trekking in the Himalayas in early July.

A fifth Westerner, Norwegian Hans-Christian Ostro, 27, was abducted at the same time and decapitated by the kidnappers in mid-August.

Mr. Shah's appeal for the immediate release of the hostages came a day after Al-Faran threatened to kill the four unless the Indian government released 15 imprisoned Muslim guerrillas.

The Indian government has ruled out exchanging any prisoners for the hostages and said a commando-style rescue operation would be too risky.

Kashmir government spokesman Kulbushan Jindiyal also called on the kidnappers Monday to free the hostages, one of whom is reportedly in critical

condition.

"We once again request the captors to set free the four considering the sentiments of the Kashmiri people and the relatives of the hostages," the spokesman said.

"We are still hopeful that the militants will respond positively to our appeal," he added.

Indian authorities believe that Al-Faran is a front for the Harkat-ul-Ansar guerrilla outfit, which kidnapped two British trekkers last year and released them unharmed after 17 days.

More than 12,000 people have died in separatist-related violence in Kashmir since 1989. India accuses Pakistan of fomenting insurgency in the disputed state but Islamabad denies the allegation.

Yeltsin moves to sanatorium

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin left hospital for a sanatorium Monday after a month of treatment for a heart complaint, spokesman Sergei Medvedev said.

But Medvedev refused to be drawn on whether Yeltsin, who remains under medical supervision at Barvikha Sanatorium, would be fit to campaign for Dec. 17 parliamentary elections that now dominate the Russian political landscape.

Asked if Mr. Yeltsin would still be in the sanatorium on polling day, Mr. Medvedev replied: "That's a question you have to ask the doctors."

Mr. Medvedev said by telephone that Mr. Yeltsin, 64, had moved to Barvikha Sanatorium, in a wooded

area some 20 kilometres west of Moscow. "The president will be staying at Barvikha until he is completely well," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin was flown to hospital by helicopter on Oct. 26 after a second mild heart attack in less than four months. Aides had said they expected the recovery to be slower this time.

On the last occasion he spent two weeks in hospital and two in the Barvikha Sanatorium before returning to face the election fray.

Communists and their conservative allies, bitterly opposed to Mr. Yeltsin, currently top the opinion polls in the election for the State Duma lower house. A Kremlin analysis forecasts that the Communists will win around 14 per cent of

the vote.

But Russia's strong presidential system means the Communists may not be able to make many political and economic changes, even if they do well in the parliamentary poll.

A presidential election is due next June and it is not yet clear if Mr. Yeltsin will stand.

Before this illness, Mr. Yeltsin had appealed to Russians not to vote for the Communists. But he has made few comments about the election from his hospital room, where he has signed documents and held a series of meetings with aides and top officials.

Aides had said earlier that they expected Mr. Yeltsin to stay in hospital until the end of November.

U.K. MP escapes injury in knife attack

LONDON (R) — An attacker held a knife to the throat of prominent British opposition politician Paddy Ashdown during a fact-finding walk through his constituency, police said Monday.

The 54-year-old member of parliament was investigating allegations of racism with a local priest in the southwestern English town of Yeovil late Sunday night when they were confronted by a small gang of youths.

A police spokesman said the youths shouted abuse at Mr. Ashdown, leader of Britain's minority Liberal Democrats.

A group of older men joined in and one of them bit Mr. Ashdown on the thigh. The man then drew a flick knife and put it to the politician's throat.

"Threats were made but he managed to calm the chap down. Uniformed officers then arrived, they were threatened but managed to arrest the man," said the spokesman.

Police said a 51-year-old man had been detained and

was being questioned about the incident, which highlighted widespread concern in Britain about crime levels.

Mr. Ashdown, a former British army commando, said: "This was a minor incident and the kind of thing that people and the police have to cope with late at night at the weekend in towns centres everywhere in the country. The police acted very swiftly and effectively."



Sri Lankan soldiers prepare a tank to advance on the Tamil Tiger guerrillas in the northern Jaffna peninsula (AFP photo)

Scores of Rwandan exiles detained in Kenya

NAIROBI (R) — Kenya has detained scores of Rwandan Hutu exiles who fled here after last year's genocide and civil war, community leaders said.

Innocent Butare, a Hutu refugee leader, estimated that about 60 people were arrested Friday and Saturday and were being held in Nairobi police stations.

Apart from two bishops, it appeared that the most prominent exiles — members of the former regime blamed for the genocide of up to one million Tutsis and allied Hutus — either slipped the net or were not wanted by Kenyan police.

Police headquarters declined to comment about the swoop and the Foreign Ministry said it was in the dark.

Commissioner of Police Shadrack Kiriki did not deny the "Operation Wits" going ahead but declined to comment on it. "I will be issuing no statement on the matter," he told Reuters.

The ringleaders of the genocide will be tried by an

international tribunal due to start sitting in Tanzania early next year. Exiles are nervously waiting to hear which names are on the first list of indictments which was signed last week.

Some Rwandan exiles said the raids began last Thursday in Nairobi's Kawangware and Koma Rock townships and then spread to the affluent areas of Kilimani and Kileleshwa.

"In Kawangware alone, over 70 people were arrested, mainly males. They (police) came in the night and picked up all Rwandan men in the township. They told us nothing, they just arrested them," said one Rwandan woman who only agreed to be identified as Beatrice.

But Mr. Butare, leader of a group claiming to represent two million Hutu refugees in Africa, said about 60 were detained.

"I have just toured some of the police stations with lawyers and seen about 25 of them."

"They were picked up from their homes Friday

night and Saturday and were told they will be questioned today," he said.

Mr. Butare told Reuters the detainees were Rwandans apart from a couple of Burundians and all came to Kenya last year and this year. He said some longstanding members of the Rwandan community in Kenya were arrested but quickly released.

"We have no idea yet why they were arrested and none has been charged so far," Mr. Butare, of the Rally For the Return of Refugees and Democracy in Rwanda (RDR), said.

Among those detained in Nairobi was Bishop Adoniah Sebununguri, former dean of the Anglican Church in Rwanda. He was later released because of his advanced age but told that police would question him later, church sources said.

Rwanda's Protestant and Catholic hierarchy are accused by the new government in Kigali of doing nothing to stop the killings.

Other prominent Rwandan exiles seemed to

have escaped the roundup, with police finding only children and weeping wives in many homes.

Agathe Hahyirimana, widow of the late Rwandan president, as well as ex-ministers and senior army officers, had vanished by the time the operation got underway, exile sources said. They believed she had gone to Zaire.

Kenya has repeatedly been forced to define and clarify its position on the Nuremberg-style trials since President Daniel Arap Moi said in early October Kenya would not cooperate.

Earlier this month the tribunal's chief prosecutor, Judge Richard Goldstone, was assured by Kenyan authorities he had their full support despite misgivings about the tribunal's mandate.

Last week Kenyan Foreign Minister Kalonzo Musyoka said his government would not be tipping off any likely suspects and would prevent any from fleeing the country.

Sri Lankan rebels trapped in Jaffna call for help

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas have called for reinforcements for a final stand in Jaffna City against Sri Lankan troops blasting through the booby-trapped urban maze with tanks, a military spokesman said Monday.

At least 55 guerrillas and 12 soldiers were killed Sunday as rebel defenders, trapped inside the town by an army pincer movement last week, put up stiff resistance, a military spokesman said.

He said commandos and airborne troops spearheading the latest thrust to capture Jaffna resumed their advance into the heart of town at dawn Monday, moving carefully through a maze of mines and booby traps.

"(Rebel radio) transmissions indicated the terrorists trapped inside Jaffna City are calling for medical assistance and reinforcements," he said.

The radio traffic monitored by the army also indicated the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) fighters were running short of ammunition, he said.

"The terrorists, from prepared defensive positions with overhead cover, offered heavy resistance,"

The army used tanks to destroy rebel fortifications in the path of advancing troops, he added.

Stiff rebel resistance and the loss of several transport planes to Tiger fire and accidents had slowed the offensive and the evacuation of casualties, military sources said.

The LTTE, observing Heroes Day to honour rebels killed in the war, pledged to defend Jaffna with suicide squads to ensure the army paid a heavy price for the capture of their spiritual capital.

"We are defending it strongly, our suicide squads are standing by," Sivagnanam Karikalan, deputy political leader of the Tigers, told Reuters in an interview at his headquarters in the east.

He said the rebel suicide squads would be pressed into service to defend Jaffna City, seen by the LTTE as the heart of a homeland they want to establish in the north and the east for minority Tamils.

"They can capture it but we will make them pay dearly," he warned from his base, across a lagoon from Batticaloa town.

Some 50,000 people have died in 12 years of fighting

between troops and the separatists.

The Tigers meanwhile called on the few Tamils in the armed forces to resign immediately and support them in their decisive battle to save Jaffna.

Rebel posters which appeared overnight in the town of Akkaraiappu in the eastern Amparai district said Tamils in the armed forces had so far ignored Tamil Tiger demands not to serve in the military, residents said.

"We cannot forgive you any further," one poster said.

The posters did not say what the rebels would do to those who ignored their warning.

Rebel Voice of Tigers radio, said five civilians died in air and artillery strikes in Vadamarachchi and Tenmarachchi in the eastern half of the Jaffna peninsula Sunday.

The radio was monitored by Reuters in Vavuniya, the northernmost town under government control.

A military spokesman said he had no information on these attacks but added that security forces tried their best to avoid civilian casualties.

Meanwhile Tamil rebel

leader Velupillai Prabhakaran Monday admitted the army may take his stronghold of Jaffna but said the door to peace would be closed as long as troops occupied the town.

"They may boast the flag and light firecrackers but we want to express one thing," the shadowy leader of the LTTE told Voice of Tigers radio. "As long as the Sri Lankan Armed Forces occupy Jaffna, the door to peace talks will always remain tightly shut."

Mr. Prabhakaran, speaking in a broadcast heard in the northern government-ruled town of Vavuniya, said the LTTE had not been "terribly weakened" in the current offensive and the military had lost more men than the rebels.

The military puts its own death toll at about 300 since the launch of the offensive, codenamed Operation Riviresa, on Oct. 17 and says the rebels have lost more than 1,000 men.

"The war for Jaffna is only a temporary setback," Mr. Prabhakaran said.

"From this setback we will reach victory."

He appealed to "young men and women to join our ranks" in the war which has raged since 1983.

Britain cool on new Irish peace proposals

LONDON (R) — Britain reacted coolly Monday to new Irish proposals aimed at breaking a deadlock in the Northern Ireland peace process ahead of a keenly awaited visit by U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Irish Prime Minister John Bruton, anxious for a breakthrough before Mr. Clinton arrives in Belfast Thursday, sent his British counterpart John Major new ideas Sunday to try to solve the problem of disarming IRA guerrillas.

But British government officials said that the plans did not amount to a significant advance and that efforts to arrange a meeting between Mr. Bruton and Mr. Major to break the impasse before Mr. Clinton's visit had been abandoned.

The Daily Telegraph quoted an unnamed British official as saying Dublin had advanced a "Sinn Fein prospectus".

"The search for a permanent peace has been bogged down by Britain's insistence that Republican and Protestant guerrillas hand over their weapons before

the start of all-party talks on a political settlement.

The Daily Telegraph, quoting British government sources, said Dublin was "looking for a fudge" on the arms issue.

The newspaper said Dublin appeared to be supporting demands by Sinn Fein, the Irish Republican Army's political wing, that British army and police weapons should be included in any handover of arms.

Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams said at the weekend that a new round of violence in a conflict that cost 3,200 lives was inevitable unless Britain backed down.

It was his gravest forecast since Northern Ireland found a fragile peace 15 months ago after the IRA silenced the guns it had used to fight British rule in a gesture to win Sinn Fein's entry into the political mainstream.

"I do think it (a return to conflict) is inevitable unless we start talking... because all of the causes of conflict... remain," Mr. Adams said in British radio interview.

Mr. Adams's warning coincided with reports that British intelligence believed a 15-month-old ceasefire by the IRA and its pro-British extremist Protestant foes might break because of the diplomatic deadlock.

Mr. Bruton's letter to Mr. Major contained new language in a bid to enable the two countries to adopt a so-called twin-track approach to solving the Northern Ireland conflict.

Under this, Britain and Ireland would hold preparatory talks with all parties with a view to convening an all-party conference while an international panel reviewed disarmament.

Mr. Bruton told Britain tersely last week that this would not work if Britain continued to demand a token surrender of arms and explosives as the price for a ticket to the talks.

Britain says the province's majority Protestant Unionist politicians, who want Northern Ireland to remain part of Britain, will not take part in these talks unless they know their ideological foes have been disarmed.

Meanwhile President Clinton hopes to help revive Northern Ireland's peace process when he visits the province this week but aides insist the man who took on the problems of Bosnia and the Middle East has no panacea.

"The visit was not designed to solve the Irish problem," William Crowe, the U.S. ambassador to Britain, said in an interview. "Our job is to keep pushing and to keep plugging," the retired admiral added. "But please don't expect him to pull any rabbits out of hats — it's not that kind of visit."

Mr. Clinton Thursday will become the first serving U.S. president to visit Northern Ireland, on a trip that begins in London Wednesday and ends in Dublin Friday.

Mr. Clinton had voiced hopes earlier this year that all-party peace talks would be under way before his visit but persistent differences over guerrilla disarmament have stalled progress.

Philippine talks open with hope despite violence

JAKARTA (R) — Talks between the Philippine government and Muslim rebels opened in Indonesia Monday with hopes of peace perched alongside threats of further violence in the country's southern provinces.

The peace talks, the third hosted by Indonesia, are aimed at ending a 23-year revolt led by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) for Muslim self-rule in the south Philippines.

"The situation is both bright and grim," Nur Misuari, MNLF chairman and a former university professor, told reporters after the opening ceremony.

"It is bright because we have already accomplished more than 98 per cent of the work," Mr. Misuari said.

The tentative programme for the five-day meeting distributed by host Indonesia has a signing agreement scheduled Friday afternoon on the last day of the talks.

"We say it is grim and awkward because the

Philippine Armed Forces are saturating every part of the Moro homeland and preparing for war," Mr. Misuari added.

Earlier, in a lengthy and passionate opening speech, Mr. Misuari accused the Philippine Armed Forces of repeated violations of an existing ceasefire agreement in the southern Mindanao Island, 800 kilometres south of Manila.

But Manuel Yan, Manila's head of delegation, brushed aside the problems saying they had been referred to an existing ceasefire committee.

Instead, he maintained an optimistic note set in his opening address in which he said the global momentum could not be avoided in the South East Asia.

He said much had been achieved in lower level talks since the parties last formally met in Jakarta in September 1994.

"We can demonstrate substantial achievement since our second round of talks last year and only very few

issues separate us from finally achieving an agreement," Mr. Yan later told reporters.

"We have come here to try to close the gap which separates us in those very few remaining contentious issues," he said, adding peace talks would continue if there was no agreement.

The talks have been overshadowed by a threat of extremist violence following a large explosion in Zamboanga, the capital of Mindanao, hours before they opened.

Mr. Misuari's leadership of the Moro Muslim minority has been challenged by three factions, primarily the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), considered by Manila potentially more dangerous than the MNLF.

"Once we get real autonomy here I am sure we can get them to cooperate with us," Mr. Misuari said.

Two smaller groups, the Abu Sayyaf fundamentalists and the National Islamic Command Council, composed of young Muslim

milants and MNLF veterans, are also outside the talks.

Officials have said raids like that carried out jointly by Abu Sayyaf and the Islamic Command in April on the Christian town of Ipil, in which 53 largely unarmed civilians were killed, are expected to continue if the talks fail.

Mr. Misuari himself said the situation may worsen if the parties failed to come up with a peace agreement.

"If we don't get it, not only Abu Sayyaf, the Islamic Command Council (and) the MILF, but even the MNLF rank and file I'm sure will break ranks and make a choice of war which will not be good for our people," he said.

The MILF launched a Muslim secessionist uprising in mainly Catholic Philippines in 1972, but has since moderated its claim to one of autonomy after the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) mediator at the Jakarta talks, intervened.

S. Korea students try to storm ex-presidents' homes

SEOUL (R) — South Korean riot police threw a protective cordon around the homes of former presidents Roh Tae-Woo and Chun Doo Hwan Monday to block militant students seeking to storm the residences.

About 500 students armed with rocks and iron bars tried to fight their way to the luxury residences through ranks of riot police who fired volleys of tear gas.

The students have vowed to step up intimidation of the former presidents for their roles in the brutal military suppression of a 1980 popular rebellion against martial law in the southern city of Kwangju.

"Execute Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo," chanted the students, many of them from Kwangju.

One student leader told

Reuters a team had been formed to try to make citizens' arrest of Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh. Mr. Roh, however, is already in custody for confessing he maintained a slush fund during his tenure.

Some students are demanding President Kim Young-Sam set up a special prosecution team to investigate the Kwangju tragedy in which almost 200 people died according to official counts.

The 10-day Kwangju revolt followed a 1979 military coup led by then army Major-Generals Chun and Roh.

The students clashed with riot police outside Yonsei University in western Seoul near the homes of Mr. Roh and Mr. Chun.

Monday's protest was the first violent demonstration since President Kim last

week ordered his ruling Democratic Liberal Party to draft a special law to punish his two predecessors for crushing the revolt.

More than 1,000 people staged a peaceful march in central Seoul Saturday demanding Mr. Kim implement his decision immediately and form a special prosecution team, which has also been a demand of the opposition.

Meanwhile, prosecutors Monday raced against a Dec. 5 deadline to indict Mr. Roh on bribery charges in the country's biggest corruption scandal.

Mr. Roh, 62, was arrested and detained on Nov. 16 for allegedly accepting more than \$300 million from big businesses during his 1988-93 presidency.

Asked if the prosecution would indict Mr. Roh before the actual deadline,

when by law he must either be indicted or freed, senior prosecutor Ahn Kang-Min told reporters: "Yes. That's why we are in a hurry now."

Prosecutors, now in the final stage of their probes into Mr. Roh's slush funds, have said they are considering charging 24 conglomerates, including the country's top four, with bribery.

Mr. Chun has kept a low profile since surfacing in public in 1990 from a two-year self-imposed domestic exile in a Buddhist monastery. He also admitted to corruption during his term.

The opposition Democratic Party Monday called for the resignation of all politicians and government officials responsible for the Kwangju massacre.

President Kim has made clear only those at the very top will face charges.

Burma warns opposition over political speeches

RANGOON (Agencies) — The Burmese government Monday warned that the opposition would be held responsible for any unrest stemming from political speeches aimed at breeding "hatred and animosity" towards the junta.

An editorial in the official New Light Of Myanmar newspaper said that political speeches made by the opposition were "extreme views... expressed to breed hatred and animosity against the government."

The article, although it did not mention her by name, was referring to opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's weekly addresses to supporters outside her home since her release from house arrest on July 10.

"If this goes on, a number of persons, maybe by the hundreds or maybe by the thousands will be persecuted," it said, before asking if the opposition could guarantee that law and order would not be breached.

It added that this "slandering group" had criticised "without any reasoning" the junta's showcase National Convention, which reconvenes Tuesday to draw up a new constitution for Burma.

It was the first reference to a threat Wednesday by Mrs. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) that it could boycott the convention as it was "totally unacceptable" to the people of Burma in its present form.

The writer of the editorial,

using a pseudonym, suggested that Burmese authorities should warn the concerned party that if "any riot occurs as a result of your instigations... you are all entirely responsible."

Mrs. Suu Kyi and the NLD have come under constant indirect attack in editorials in the official press, but analysts here say Monday's editorial was one of the most blunt.

The junta has not prevented Mrs. Suu Kyi from making her weekly addresses, usually on democratic themes, to crowds of up to 2,000 people despite laws banning assembly of more than five people and the making of political speeches.

Mrs. Suu Kyi said she would stay away from a military-sponsored National Convention drafting a new constitution for Burma but that her party would attend the opening.

"I am not involved in the National Convention as an individual," the 50-year-old secretary general of the National League for Democracy (NLD) party told Reuters Monday at her lakeside Rangoon home.

Mrs. Suu Kyi was freed unconditionally by the ruling military junta in July after serving six years of house arrest.

"The NLD will be attending the opening ceremony tomorrow to find out what the National Convention convening committee has to

say," she said, adding the party would then decide whether to participate in the process.

Mrs. Suu Kyi had previously threatened that the NLD would boycott the convention if it continued in an "undemocratic" manner.

Nearly 700 delegates, mostly hand-picked by Burma's ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), will assemble Tuesday for the fifth session of the convention, which has been meeting sporadically since January 1993 to draft guidelines for a new constitution.

Many diplomats had hoped Mrs. Suu Kyi and the NLD would make a definitive statement on its participation before the opening.

They said if the party does not make a decision, it could be playing the game advocated by the SLORC, which is hoping Mrs. Suu Kyi will be forgotten or dismissed as ineffective if nothing comes of her repeated but unanswered calls for dialogue.

In previous constitutional talks, some NLD members and other "elected representatives" participated in a very limited way, making up only about 15 per cent of the total delegates to the convention.

Aye Maung, a member of the National Convention Convening Committee, said Monday only the people who had previously been appointed as delegates

could participate in the process.

Mrs. Suu Kyi said the NLD feels the convention as it stands is not democratic.

"We do not think the National Convention in its present form is going to help achieve either national reconciliation or multi-party democracy or a constitution that people can support and trust," she said.

Mrs. Suu Kyi, who previously had called the convention process a "sham" said the NLD had always felt frustrated by the lack of democracy in the constitution-writing process.

"The form of National Convention needs to be changed so that it's a general National Convention," she said.

When asked about diplomats' comments that she was being unusually provocative with her outright criticism of the convention process, Mrs. Suu Kyi said the party felt it was time to make its views known.

"The NLD has always protested against it, but (protests) have always gone unheeded and unheard. So we had to take it one step further and make our objections public," she said.

The constitution as it stands calls for the military to hold a controlling stake in the country's government.

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Frame for new picture

ALTHOUGH THERE is a standing tradition that the Arab country that hosts the Arab League would have one of its nationals occupy the seat of its secretary general, we think this de facto policy calls for reconsideration. Egypt has just renominated Esmat Meguid for a second term after his current term ends in May. Dr. Abdul Meguid is certainly a very qualified man who has served the Arab League well during his term of office and there is nothing personal about our proposal that other Arab nationals be considered for the post.

To begin with, we think it is totally wrong to have the host country occupy the highest post of the league for all times. We contend that it would be infinitely fairer to give way to a national from outside the host state to become the next secretary general of the Arab organisation. The United Nations is seated in New York but that did not mean that its secretary general should be from the United States. The same applies to seats of other regional and international organisations where the host country does not monopolise the highest office. Given the fact that the permanent seat of the Arab League will arguably always be in Egypt, assigning the leadership post of the organisation to an Egyptian would necessarily mean that Cairo would monopolise the post forever.

Some of the problems of the League, and they are many, are due to the absence of new blood in the Arab institution. Many of its officials have been there for much too long. There is hardly a turnover when it comes to sensitive posts. What makes the incumbency of Dr. Abdul Meguid even more controversial is his wait-and-see policy towards Arab reconciliation. Rather than seek and pursue an all-out effort towards this goal, Dr. Abdul Meguid has been advocating an attitude of patience where the clouds of the Gulf war are allowed to stay in the atmosphere until such time when they can disappear all by themselves.

The history of the Arab League thus far calls for more assertive policies vis-a-vis Arab reconciliation as well as for new rules and guidelines with a view to assuring a more equitable distribution of responsibilities. Above all, we believe that the post of secretary general should become rotational among Arab countries. This principle could be enacted in the charter of the league when it comes up for review as has been widely reported.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RAI Arabic daily Monday described the Euro-Mediterranean conference in Barcelona as part of the world community's open backing for development in the Mediterranean basin and support for the Middle East peace process. Delegates from 27 Arab and European countries involved in the meetings are bound to discuss mechanisms for common partnerships in economic, social and political fields and the prospect of creating a free trade zone by the year 2010, said the paper. Jordan, which was instrumental in paving the ground for the conference through its contacts with European nations and through constructive and practical proposals listed on the agenda, stands to benefit from the meeting economically and financially because the Europeans are planning to allocate billions of dollars for their future partnership agreements with the countries in the Mediterranean zone, according to the daily. It is hoped, said the paper, that the conference will yield fruitful results that would contribute to enhancing peace and security in the Mediterranean zone on the one hand and help finance the infrastructure of a more prosperous future for its people on the other.

DESPITE THE lapse of several months since the start of the current scholastic year, some schools in the remote and so-called less fortunate regions of Jordan lack basic requirements, said a writer in Al Dustur. Mohammad Dawoud pointed out that these schools still lack sufficient numbers of teachers while the school buildings are in bad need for repair. The different government departments never lose an opportunity to hold seminars or workshops to tackle different issues of concern to the public, but so far none has been held to deal with the chronic problem of schools in less fortunate regions, said the writer. The Ministry of Education, said the writer, bears the prime responsibility for this situation because it has been entrusted with the task of providing the basic requirements for education in the country.

The View from Fourth Circle

The Euros, the Meds and our ancient civilisational schoolhouse

By Rami G. Khouri

THE TWO-DAY Euro-Mediterranean conference which started Monday in Barcelona, Spain, will receive unspiced coverage in the Middle Eastern and European mass media. This is probably understandable (in view of the large number of conferences, summits, jamborees and global love fests that we are subjected to these days), but also unfortunate, because the Barcelona gathering represents a rare historic event.

The Barcelona meeting of foreign ministers is important at one level because it tackles a wide range of absolutely crucial issues for the future well-being of Europe and the Mediterranean — economics, trade, military, and other forms of security, drugs, immigration, political culture, and many others. Its approach is ambitious and comprehensive, yet also realistic, sensitive and patient. This Euro-Mediterranean endeavour seeks to promote nothing less than civilisational partnership, economic complementarity, and collective national security — i.e. it seeks both to overcome history's problems and to influence future history.

The peoples of Europe and the Mediterranean world have been locked in a historical embrace almost since the dawn of recorded history, when Early Bronze Age traders moved goods such as ivory, dyes and seashells between the northern and eastern rims of the Mediterranean. For about 2500 years, Europeans and Middle Easterners have been alternately occupying and learning from one another — perhaps the single most sustained, energetic and mutually rewarding dynamic of cross-cultural fertilisation in all human history. Twice in the last two millennia, Middle Easterners ruled Europe's peripheries (the Balkans and Spain/France) and tried unsuccessfully to penetrate the interior. Three times in the same period (the Roman Empire, the Crusaders and 18th century colonialism) European imperial armies conquered Middle Eastern lands and stayed, as rulers, for centuries.

There is much blood spilled between Europe and the Mediterranean, but also much science, ethics and law exchanged between them. Each of us represents to the other an inescapable, frightening historical ghost, a nemesis long slayed but, for some reason, still feared. We also represent to each another a continuing source of material well-being, even of spiritual and cultural renewal. We are destined, by the defining dictates of geographic proximity, to remain locked in our ancient embrace of mutual encroachment and enrichment; but, we now realise that we can manage this relationship in a more constructive manner, so that we move from mere physical proximity to more active socio-economic partnership.

It is important to keep in mind three cardinal points that hang over this endeavour like a sword ready to fall down and kill it: a) the Euro-Arab Dialogue of the 1970s that died because it primarily reflected a transparent European desire to cash in on the post-1973 Arab oil bonanza; b) the tendency by some distraught Middle Eastern states to seek salvation by blindly imitating European values and sys-

tems, as Turkey, Iran and Egypt tried to do in the 19th century without much success; and, c) the desire by some in Europe to disengage fully from mass immigration, drugs, alienated cultures and other threats emanating from the troubled lands to the south, by erecting impenetrable political, cultural and economic barriers.

To their credit, all involved in the Barcelona conference have adopted a more comprehensive, positive and integrated approach to Euro-Med relations. In the economic field, the conference aims for nothing less than a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area by the year 2010 — a development of incalculably positive impact on both sides if it materialises. There are parallel grand aims in shared political principles and values, security, culture, communications, education and other important sectors of life.

Perhaps most impressive of all is the spirit of this endeavour — a spirit of equal partnership between the two principal groups of countries. This is a logical consequence of our memories and our parallel sense of humility in the face of time; both of us realise that history takes you up to the top of the list of nations and then drops you down to close to the bottom, only to nudge you up again in due course. We realise that power is transient, that Europe and the Mediterranean states can best assure their future well-being by working together on the basis of the only other durable phenomenon that they have always shared along with their frontiers — what the Paris-based Moroccan scholar Mohammed Arkoun refers to as the "legacy of humanism" that has always defined the relationship between the countries of the Mediterranean.

The elements of humanism are very much visible in the proceedings of the Barcelona meeting including concepts such as democracy, pluralism, religious tolerance, personal improvement, and mutually satisfying inter-cultural exchanges. Despite the wide gaps that separate Euro and Med societies in terms of technology, per capita income or political cultures, they share a more profound tradition of humanistic societies that are at once progressive yet humane, productive yet egalitarian, innovative yet stable and respectful of tradition.

I would argue that even though the United States and Japan today are more technologically advanced or commercially vibrant than Europe or the Mediterranean world, they are well behind the Euro-Med cultures in terms of the totality of humanistic values — values that combine the dignity of the human spirit, body and mind with the material pleasures of modern consumer society. Is it because we look to the USA, Japan, Taiwan and other cultures and glimpse what the future may hold that we in Europe and the Mediterranean basin reach out to one another to build a human community that avoids the future's excesses while building on the past's successes?

The idea of building a common Euro-Med ethic of nation-building and intra-regional cooperation for the collective good is so audacious as to be naive, almost

foolhardy. But it is not so strange, I would suggest, in view of the long history of mutual colonisation and domination of the two principal parties to the endeavour. European, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern expansionism (Rome, Egypt, Greece, Persia, Assyria, Ottomanism, and many others) define the single most important historical process of the last several millennia — colonialism. Therefore, the Euros and the Meds today may be attempting nothing less than a decolonisation of the ethic of intra-regional interaction — a declaration that colonialism may be part of our historical legacy, but that it should not be part of our future horizons. The reason for this is simple: colonialism today is unacceptable and unsustainable according to today's human ethic (the fact that it was once acceptable to both the Euros and the Meds during their respective humanistic jamborees is a nagging problem of history more than a reason for us to get sidetracked from our new, serious, pleasant mission).

The statements and aspirations of the Barcelona initiative are couched in such egalitarian and sensitive language that I find it hard to believe that this is neither a cruel trick nor a fantastic dream. I suspect it is an important, potentially historic initiative launched by neighbours who have finally appreciated that there is more to be gained from respecting than from ruling the neighbours. We are not only altruistic, though. We are driven by darker passions.

The Euros and the Meds are worried folks, fearful of neighbouring threats, lured by neighbouring temptations. Some on both sides occasionally even consider re-colonisation as a possible response to the dangers of fragmentation, collapse and mass emigration in some fragile southern lands. The sensible majority, however, is more astute, more attuned to the lessons of history and the promises of genuine humanism.

This is not only a chance for Euros and Meds to interact on a rational basis for their own future well-being; it is also an opportunity — once again — for the sensible people of Europe and the Mediterranean to set an example of mature nationhood for the rest of the world. Colonial aggrandizement is out of fashion, and globalisation is not yet firmly rooted as a problem-solving technique. Regionalism and contiguous inter-regional cooperation seem promising candidate for a new means of addressing common transnational problems in an effective manner.

The fact that this occurs in Spain is appropriate to the point of pan-millennial drama: the Iberian land that experienced the best and worst of Middle Eastern/European interaction in the medieval Islamic era, that gave birth to the modern nation-state in the 15th century, and that helped launch the armada of vexing European colonialism now hosts a modern bid to learn from the lessons of the past, for the purpose of building a better future. Once again, Spain is our teacher, and the entire Mediterranean world our schoolhouse.

Voters register a loss of faith in extremes

The results of this month's presidential elections in Algeria offer hope that a middle way can be found, writes David Hirst

THE DEADLIEST operation carried out by Groupes Islamiques Armes (GIA), the extreme wing of Algeria's fundamentalist insurgency, was their attempt to blow up the police headquarters in Algiers early this year.

It involved a degree of self-sacrificing heroism that a top PLO diplomat in Algiers found impressive. When, he said, the Palestinians' Hamas send their men on suicide missions they can spare only one "martyr" at a time. But Islamists in Algeria nonchalantly muster three. "One drove the suicide vehicle," he said, "another pressed the button — and the third shouted their indispensable cry 'God is Great' just before he died."

It seems to be temperamentally Algerian, this readiness to go to extremes. But while such self-sacrifice might command respect if it is noble in purpose, it loses it if it is not. The presidential elections show that, if some Algerians once thought it was noble, the great majority no longer do.

The extremists began their campaign of violence soon after the army-backed regime, in January 1992, reneged on three years of political "liberalisation", cancelling parliamentary elections and thereby denying the broad Islamist movement, from which the GIA later grew, a legitimate, essentially peaceful road to power.

The police headquarters bombing went badly wrong, but even if it hadn't, even it had blown up its intended target, instead of killing 42 bystanders, the self-sacrificing heroism would no longer have redeemed it in people's eyes.

The terror, said El Watan newspaper recently, "has been a terror that kills the doctor and the journalist, the civil servant and the teacher, which, worse still, slits children's throats and

violates women even as it promises paradise to the hundreds whom it has managed to enlist."

Like most of the press, El Watan is strongly anti-Islamist. And it is clear from conversations with ordinary people that it is not just a verdict of "intellectuals", even though intellectuals, as one of the terrorists' chosen targets, have grounds for reaching it.

More than the GIA's barbarous deeds, perhaps, the words that accompany them have really shocked — the open, unabashed call, for example, for killing not just the "renegades" who work for "the godless state", but the "wives, sisters and daughters of renegades", too. Such blood-curdling excess, plus all manner of prurient prohibitions which, Iranian-style, the GIA seeks to impose, have proved just what a fear-some, totalitarian, joyless, and above all ignorant utopia their state, would be. It, seems to be the general intuitive grasp of this that accounts for presidential election results that have surprised even the regime itself.

In the 1992 parliamentary elections, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) won about a third of the vote. And that third included not only the committed Islamists themselves, but a great many "portent" voters who, at that time, admired them for the blows they were dealing to a wholly discredited regime, and did not stop to think too long about the kind of regime they might put in its place.

But three years on they have stopped to think. Three-quarters of the electorate voted this month. The election was far from ideal. The two main secular parties, no lightweights, urged a boycott of the election on the grounds that there can be no real democracy unless all the representative forces

in the political arena can partake in it. Army and police daily violate human rights.

None the less, the size of the turn-out was at least as important as who it was for, and the fact is that more people voted in these admittedly flawed presidential elections than they did in the untrammelled parliamentary ones in 1992. In doing so, they sent the powerful message which some within the regime were rightly confident they would: that they now reject the Islamist movement, or at least the extremist course it has taken since they voted for it three years ago.

But that doesn't mean they voted for the regime. It simply means that, for the voters, there are two extremes. They rejected the first in the 1992 parliamentary elections. That was the extremism of the regime itself, whose misdeeds they deem to have spawned the second (the Islamists), which they have now, in turn, repudiated.

The regime's extremism is that of its inner core, its cabal of generals who have dominated it since independence in 1962. They are mysterious and largely invisible, but they are universally regarded as a privileged caste, deeply corrupt, despotic, violent and manipulative. First behind the facade of one-party socialism and then of the political and economic liberalisation that supposedly "corrected" it, they are held ultimately to blame for all the socio-economic

woes on which Islamic violence has thrived. Since that violence arose, the so-called "enclaves" among the generals — those who seek a strictly "security" solution, not a "political" one — have been in the ascendancy. Extremes meet, and in a sense, the terror has actually been a godsend for them, because it enabled them to present

themselves as a "last rampart" against a popular insurgency that frightened powerful vested interests besides themselves, and indeed a good many honest "democrats" too.

The convergence of interests between two extremes seems so self-evident to many Algerians that, in their belief, the terror has been the handiwork not merely of the GIA, but of the security services which infiltrated it.

So, emphatically, it was not for the regime that the people voted. It was first for the principle of free choice. Second, it was for the "rupture" which all four candidates promised. Rupture, the commonest word in Algeria's political vocabulary, is shorthand for a total break with all that is rotten in the regime.

There are two reasons why they think Mr. Zeroual is the man for the rupture. One is that he is not only widely seen as the "best" of the generals, but as honest and sincere too. The other is that, being a product of the system, he knows best how to dismantle it.

He is a man of the middle way. It will be far from easy for him, in taking on the system, to woo the "reconcilers" away from the "enclaves" and the powerful, indeed demonstrably malevolent, vested interests which will be penalised with them. And it won't be much easier for him to woo the relative moderates of the Islamist movement from the extremists who have proved as ready to turn on their moderates as, in the opposite camp, eradicators have on reconcilers. But in saying a plague on both their houses, and exorcising the extremist demons which, if the PLO diplomat is right, have a place in every Algerian soul, the people have made it much easier for him.

The Guardian

For a lasting peace, bitter Bosnians must see justice done

By David Rieff

NEW YORK — The Bosnian peace agreement is rightly being hailed as a triumph for American diplomacy and, with luck, as the beginning of the end of the conflict.

Unfortunately, the second proposition does not follow from the first. The Croats and President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia are delighted. But for those who fought and endured terrible hardships to keep the dream of a unitary Bosnian state alive, the accord is little more than the ratification of Bosnia's defeat.

In Sarajevo and across free Bosnia, there is as much bitterness as relief. Many in the army believed the tide of the war was shifting in their favour. This state of mind is an agent of postwar instability.

Among ordinary people, for all the relief at the prospect of peace, there is an overpowering sense of having suffered four years for nothing. Few are likely to celebrate an agreement that effectively ratifies the disappearance of Bosnia as it existed before 1992.

It was in defence of the ideal of a multinational, multiethnic Bosnia that its mainly Muslim people have shed their blood and endured privations.

For all the talk of Islamic fundamentalism, most Bosnians did not fight to see their country could turn into a monoethnic state like Serbia or Croatia but for it to survive as something different and better — like the European norm.

After both the army's failure to lift the siege of Sarajevo in May and the slaughter in Srebrenica, the Bosnians knew their only alternative was to give in. America wanted peace and was backing away from its commitment to a unitary Bosnian state.

The prospect of being caught between the Serbs and an unreliable Croatian ally while facing a Europe that was largely hostile to them and an indifferent United Nations was terrifying. Before the Bosnians ar-

rived in Dayton, they knew there was no real alternative to the humane version of ethnic partition cobbled together by Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke. President Alija Izetbegovic was right to sign.

The question is whether, even if NATO troops are sent to Bosnia, the Bosnians will accept their defeat or see enough tangible benefits in the peace to allow them to see the wisdom of President Izetbegovic's insistence that "this may not be a just peace, but it is more just than a continuation of war."

Peace and the prospective deployment of American troops are the only tangible benefits the Bosnians have received. It is not clear that American guarantees to arm and train the Bosnian forces are hard and fast.

Nor is it clear whether the reconstruction help that Bosnia needs if peace is ever truly to come will really be forthcoming. Most important, it is not clear how committed the world is to bringing those who committed mass murder at Srebrenica and countless other towns to account.

Without the catharsis of Nuremberg, Germany's return to the civilised world would have been far more difficult. Without a similar process in Bosnia, it is unlikely the peace deal initiated in Ohio will endure.

For lasting peace, the Bosnians must be reconciled to what befell them while the world watched. Given the bitterness in Bosnia, there must be justice. Without it, there will be no lasting peace, only a lull in the hostilities that will last just as long as America keeps troops in Bosnia.

There are too many Bosnians who, armed and unencumbered, will wait for the moment to take matters into their own hands.

The writer is an author and journalist who frequently writes about Bosnia and Cuba. The above article is reprinted from the New York Times.

By Dr. James Zogby

WITH LITTLE fanfare, 22 Arab-Americans had a historic meeting with both President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore. The Nov. 9 meeting, in the Cabinet Room of the White House, marked only the sixth time that a U.S. President met with the national leadership of the Arab-American community.

This was the most representative group of Arab-Americans ever brought to the White House. As such, it reflected the excellent outreach effort of the administration's Office of Public Liaison (OPL). During the past three years OPL has made a sustained effort to contact and involve all segments of the Arab-American community in a number of White House events and initiatives.

The composition of the Arab-American group also is a reflection of the extent to which the community is maturing and developing as an original constituency in U.S. politics. Among the 22 were the heads of most of the national Arab-American organizations, leaders of most of the larger country-specific groups, leaders from both political parties (including two Republicans who had served as officials in the Reagan administration and the trustees of the Democratic National Committee—i.e., major donors to the party) and Arab-American elected and appointed public officials.

During the hour-long meeting, we engaged the president on a number of issues central to our country's concerns.

Only a few days before the government shutdown, President Clinton opened the discussion by focusing on his concerns with the ongoing budget debate. He emphasized that from his administrations' perspective,

the debate was more than an issue of numbers. At stake were two different visions of the role of government and its responsibility toward people. The president made clear his intention to veto the Republican budget proposal because it cuts in social spending—for medical care, for the elderly, for education, for protection of the environment, and for the poor and disabled—were too severe.

Turning to the Middle East peace process in the wake of the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the president affirmed his resolve to support Palestinians and Israelis as they make their agreement and to work towards comprehensive regional peace.

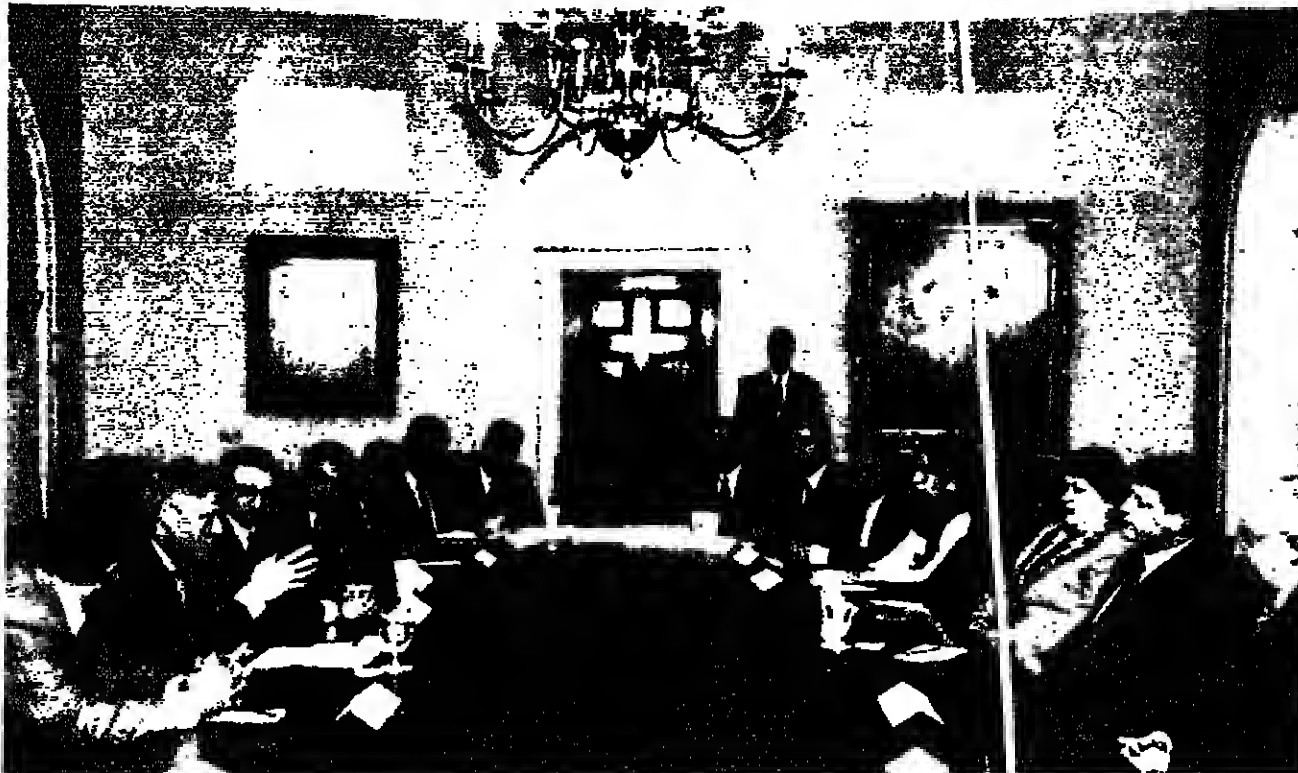
In my opening remarks, and in response to the president, I noted that our community shared the administration's concern with the growing danger of extremism both at home in the U.S. and abroad in the Middle East. The harshness and intolerance that motivated the assassin of Mr. Rabin, and the same phenomenon in its U.S. domestic variety, has become a threat to Arab-American and American-Muslim in the U.S. It was this extremism that accused the Arab and Muslim-American communities in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing—and has endangered our rights by focusing anti-terrorism legislation as if Arabs and Muslims were its prime targets. Extremism from the far-right in the U.S. has also targeted the peace process, seeking to impede its progress by passing irresponsible and destructive legislation against the PLO on the subject of Jerusalem. And, finally, this same right-wing sentiment seeking to close America's borders to new immigration and to deny social benefits to legal im-

migrants who are lawfully entitled to them. The president responded positively to all these concerns and reaffirmed that he would not allow legislative efforts by Congress to stop the peace process, which is why he opposed the Jerusalem legislation, and that he is equally concerned about the scapegoating of immigrants. Responding, in part to our concern about the unfair treatment being meted out to legal immigrants, the president indicated his commitment to veto the welfare reform legislation which has just passed Congress. This issue had been brought to the president's attention by one of the Arab-American leaders present, Ismael Ahmad, director of the Arab Community Centre for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), the nation's largest social service organization which works with Arab-Americans in Dearborn, Michigan.

Other issues raised by the assembled Arab-American leadership included the impediments to economic development in the West Bank and Gaza, Hani Masri, a Washington, DC businessman and a trustee of the Democratic Party stressed that if Israel did not remove the impediments it has placed on the Palestinian economy, the Palestinians would not receive the needed economic benefits of peace and the peace process itself would suffer.

The president clearly

Meeting with the president



U.S. President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore meet with representatives of Arab Americans

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understood this concern and emphasized that he shared the conviction that Palestinians must experience the benefits of peace if the process is to work. He committed, as he had at an earlier discussion, to review the impediments issue and to work with us to find ways to balance security concerns with economic development.

In response to an appeal from former U.S. Ambassador to Morocco Tom Nassif (who currently chairs the American Task Force on Lebanon) that the travel ban on Lebanon be removed, both the president and vice president indicated that the issue would be reviewed. Mr. Nassif's arguments for Lebanon's sovereignty and for an end

to the ban appeared to move the president, who has in the past spoken eloquently in support of the U.S.-Lebanese relationship.

As the meeting was concluding, we brought up other issues we wished to follow-up on with the White House at a later date — one of which was an issue brought to the table by Michigan's large Iraqi Chaldean community concerning the humanitarian crisis in Iraq.

On hearing this issue raised, President Clinton immediately responded with an expression of his deep concern over the situation. "Some nights I can't sleep thinking about the children of Iraq," the president said. He that Iraq

President Saddam Hussein could end this crisis if he agreed to enact U.N. Security Council resolutions designed to allow Iraq to sell oil to raise hard currency which the international community would use to provide humanitarian aid for the people of the country. But Mr. Clinton said that President Saddam had not agreed to that resolution, and as the recent defections from Iraq made clear President Saddam still has not faithfully implemented the other U.N. Security Council resolutions which are required before international sanctions can be lifted against the country.

Nevertheless, the president expressed his interest in receiving specific proposals from Arab-Americans to address the issue of providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Iraq, with the provision that no such assistance must benefit President Saddam's regime. Follow-up meetings will be held with administration officials on all of these issues as Arab-Americans build on this meeting with the president and vice president.

As further evidence of the administration's respect for the community, less than one hour after joining the president in the hour-long leadership meeting, Vice President Gore came to the site of our Tenth Anniversary Arab American Institute (AAI) conference to address the entire gathering. In his remarks the vice president said with clear pride:

"The U.S. leadership has helped create the best chance for peace in Bosnia since the war began... America has helped lead the way to a ceasefire and to the negotiations that are now underway. We have a responsibility to do our part in its implementation. Our values and our interests demand nothing less — to

stop the outrageous slaughter; to prevent war from spreading; to help build a united Europe at peace."

In recognition of the role Arab-Americans have played in U.S. life, the vice president stated:

"Arab-Americans have always exemplified the middle ground: seeking opportunity, taking responsibility. Working your way into America's mainstream while preserving your rich traditions... President Clinton came to office to preserve and fortify those values, values that Arab-Americans practice every day. And the president has enlisted Arab-Americans in this understanding — cabinet officers like Donna Shalala, White House staffers like Tom Kalli and Julia Moffet, and from my own staff Greg Simon and Holly Carver."

The vice president concluded by saying: "Every time I travel from the White House to my residence, I pass the garden memorial named for Khalil Gibran, whose words, which I paraphrase, I will leave you with tonight: As your ancestors have been builders of Damascus, Beirut and Cairo, you should be builders of New York, Chicago, Detroit, and whatever cities you reside in this new world."

"We must move forward together — build peace together."

The meeting at the White House was significant both because of the depth and diversity of the Arab-American leaders present and the substance of the issues raised. There is a recognition that Arab-Americans are a political constituency that can play a role in elections and policy formation.

The writer is president of the Arab American Institute. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

Syria offers full peace

(Continued from page 1)

resist foreign occupation.

Another row also erupted between Syria and the EU over a planned free trade zone in the region by 2010 which will involve industrial goods and services but not agricultural products.

Negotiators who have been locked in intensive talks all weekend to try to reach a

compromise admitted defeat on Monday and handed the problem over to ministers from the countries involved.

The conference has brought together foreign ministers from the 15 EU countries, Israel, Turkey, Malta, Cyprus and eight Arab delegations — Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria.

No Barak-Sharaa meeting in cards

(Continued from page 1)

reiterating Syrian assertions that Israel was responsible for the deadlock in the peace talks between the two countries.

Despite the diminishing chances for an official meeting between Mr. Sharaa and Mr. Barak, however, diplomatic sources expected the two officials to hold "con-

tacts" at the sidelines of Barcelona conference "during lunches and dinners that will be organised for the occasion."

Syria boycotted the Middle East and North Africa economic summit which was held in Amman in October because Israel took part in it but is attending the Barcelona conference even though it is attended by Israel.

Serbs press push against deal

(Continued from page 1)

Croatia and Bosnia, have hailed the peace deal and dismissed his protests. U.S. negotiator Richard Holbrooke said on Sunday the peace accord worked out at the Dayton summit would not be amended.

Milan Milutinovic, foreign minister of rump Yugoslavia, ruled out the possibility of any amendments to the Dayton peace accord.

"We can discuss other questions in Paris, if our hosts propose it, but under no circumstances the documents initiated in Dayton," he said.

The foreign minister's comments came a day after Yugoslav President Zoran Djindjic said the Belgrade government would seek to "correct" parts of the accord.

Quoted by Tanjug news agency, Mr. Djindjic said: "We will try to correct everything that isn't good," but failed to specify which parts he hoped to revise.

Britain will host an international conference in London Dec. 8-9 on implementation of the Bosnia peace plan, the Foreign Office said.

A spokesman said it would include foreign ministers of the five-nation "contact group" on Bosnia — Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States — as well as the NATO alliance, and other interested parties.

"The purpose," said the spokesman, would be "to mobilise the international community for the task

ahead. It will aim to focus on the civilian aspects of implementation" of the accord.

The conference, which is scheduled to run from the afternoon of Dec. 8 to the afternoon of Dec. 9, will "establish a coordinated structure with a senior political figure, the high representative, at its centre," said the spokesman.

Meanwhile the Bosnian foreign minister warned that if the Bosnian Serbs show "serious resistance" to the Dayton peace accord, fighting could resume and demands that Belgrade bring the Serbs under control.

Foreign Minister Mohamud Sacirbey said on a stopover in Zagreb: "If there is a serious resistance by Karadzic and Mladic to the Dayton accord, we could expect a resumption of fighting in order to protect the peace."

He was referring to Bosnian Serb military leader Ratko Mladic.

Mr. Karadzic was accused of whipping up demonstrations by Serbs in Serb-held areas of the Bosnian capital in what Mr. Sacirbey called "a very worrying indication of the intention of the Serbian side to undermine this accord."

"It is essential that Karadzic's comments be brought to the attention of the entire negotiating team at Dayton... and that (Serbian) President Slobodan Milosevic take effective measures" to see that the Dayton accord is respected, Mr. Sacirbey said.

Prince Ra'd reviews projects

(Continued from page 1)

the NRA's petroleum department, outlined the authority's exploration for oil and gas, noting that Jordan's daily gas production at Rishbi fields was about 30 million cubic metres and was expected to rise to 36 million in 1996.

During his visit to Aqaba on Sunday the Regent inspected areas that were affected by the recent earthquake and the aftermath. He met with Aqaba's acting Governor Fayez Khasawneh and the mayor and other officials. He was briefed on coordination among their departments in dealing with the effects of the earthquake.

Prince Ra'd urged the concerned authorities to train local residents in rescue and

first aid operations in natural disasters and earthquakes.

Prince Ra'd also toured some installations that were affected by the earthquake and called on the local officials to speed up the process of repairs at public buildings.

Dr. Khasawneh, who is also president of the Aqaba Region Authority (ARA), noted that a special technical task force had been formed grouping the Royal Scientific Society and the Civil Defence Department to offer services to the public through an operations room at the police department in Aqaba.

According to Dr. Zeid Adwan of the Haya Bint Al Hussein Hospital, only 30 citizens were brought to hospital for slight injuries and shock after the earthquake and there were no deaths.

Ekeus begins new Iraq mission

(Continued from page 1)

food and medicine as long as the measure undermined its sovereignty and gave Washington a pretext to maintain the economic sanctions.

"Accepting Resolution 986 would mean waiting many more years before the embargo is lifted," according to Babel newspaper, run by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday.

"Accepting the resolution will pull the rug from under the feet of those who ask for a lifting of the embargo and allow the United States to avoid such pressure," the newspaper said.

It denounced the United States as "the evil empire" and accused it of "trying to force (Iraq) into accepting the resolution in the pretext it is difficult to lift the embargo for now."

"Iraq rejected and will reject this resolution as long as it has clauses which undermine its sovereignty and independence," Babel said.

On Sunday Mr. Sahaf asked for amending the resolution to "take into account Iraq's reservations. As long as the resolution is not amended 'there will be nothing new' in Iraq's position," he said.

The resolution adopted in April allows Iraq to export up to \$1 billion worth of oil per quarter to buy food, medicine, and other humanitarian supplies, but under strict U.N. control.

Baghdad wants changes to clauses which call for distributing supplies to Kurdish regions outside Iraqi control and exporting much of the oil through Turkey.

Iraq conceded for the first time on Sunday that it was

under pressure to accept the U.N. offer.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said a parliamentary committee discussed what it described as "the hostile Western media campaign aiming at compelling Iraq to accept the unfair Resolution 986."

"It (the resolution) flagrantly violates Iraq's policy, meddles in its domestic affairs and plunders its national riches," INA said.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has repeatedly called on Baghdad to accept the terms. Diplomats say pressure is mounting on Iraqi leaders from France, Russia and China, perceived as being more sympathetic among major powers to Iraq, to agree to sell limited amounts of oil.

INA said members of the Arab and international relations committee in the parliament will write letters to counterparts in other countries, urging an implementation of paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, allowing Baghdad free oil exports.

The Arab League is also trying to persuade Iraq to enter into direct negotiations with the U.N. to discuss its oil terms.

Deputy Prime Minister Aziz on Sunday denounced U.N. sanctions on his country as criminal and said they were being maintained only to serve U.S. interests.

"The commotion about the information and documents Iraq has given to the Special Commission is meant to maintain the embargo for the longest period to realise the selfish interests of the United States," INA said, quoting Mr. Aziz.

Peres: PLO must change charter

(Continued from page 1)

committee in Tulkarem on Saturday and confiscated computers, documents and a fax machine. There were no arrests, they said.

The army spokesman said: "During an army and civil administration operation in the office of the Muslim charity committee in Tulkarem, two days ago documents were confiscated which are suspected as inciteful material."

A Palestinian police officer in Jenin said on Monday he had protested to the Israeli army over the arrest on Saturday of activists from another militant group, Islamic Jihad, in villages still under Israeli control in the Jenin area.

Israel said it had arrested 16 activists. The Palestinians reported 11 arrests.

Islamic Jihad and Hamas have carried out suicide bombings in Israel as part of a campaign of opposition to the PLO's peace accords with the Jewish state.

Israel, meanwhile, gave in to demands from 25 Palestinian police and allowed them to travel across the West Bank with all their arms to the northern town of Tulkarem, Palestinian officials said.

Earlier, the officers had been barred for several hours from leaving the self-ruled enclave of Jericho for Tulkarem after Israeli troops demanded they travel only armed with pistols, leaving behind automatic rifles.

But after long talks, the Israelis allowed them to leave Jericho to travel the 100 kilometres to the north with all their arms, Palestinian sources said.

They arrived by bus accompanied by two Palestinian police vehicles. There are now 35 Palestinian police in the town of 45,000 residents as part of the preparations for an Israeli troop withdrawal.

It was the second snag to hit the redeployment programme in two days.

On Sunday there was a stand-off in Nablus when the two sides could not agree where the first Palestinian police to arrive in the northern West Bank would be based.

After hastily-convened talks the 10 Palestinians won out and set up base in caravans near Husara, about five kilometres south of Nablus.

The Israeli army had wanted them to base the Israeli-Palestinian liaison committee in Barka, closer to Nablus just three kilometres south of the town.

Under the Sept. 28 autonomy deal, Israeli troops are due to quit six Palestinian

towns on the West Bank. They have already handed over Jericho to Palestinian control to allow elections to go ahead on Jan. 20.

Troops will also leave Kalkilya, Betlehem and Ramallah. Under special arrangements they will stay in Hebron to protect 400 settlers living among 120,000 Palestinians.

In Al Khader on the West Bank, about 50 Palestinians on Monday stopped bulldozers from levelling lands which they said had been seized by Jewish settlers close to Bethlehem.

Villagers from Al Khader said the 10-hectare site had been taken by the settlers from the neighbouring settlement of N'ew Daniel to build an industrial zone. "It is our land, nobody has sold it," they chanted.

Israeli police sealed the area to keep other demonstrators out.

Israeli soldiers shot and lightly wounded a Palestinian close to a roadblock near Ramallah, military officials said.

They fired at the car with Palestinian number plates "because of the suspicious behaviour of the driver who was lightly wounded," an army spokesman said, without giving further details.

On Sunday, an Israeli officer and a soldier were slightly hurt when stones were thrown at their vehicles in two separate West Bank incidents in Jericho and Tulkarem.

Two petrol bombs were also thrown in the direction of an Israeli military vehicle in Hebron late Sunday, but there was no damage or casualties.

The new chief of Islamic Jihad, Ramadan Abdullah Salah, pledged Monday to pursue attacks on Israeli military targets and settlements.

"We do not target the Jews because they are Jews but because they did us an injustice by appropriating our land," Mr. Salalah told the London-based Saudi newspaper Al Hayat.

Mr. Salalah succeeded Fathi Shaqqa as the leader of the Jihad after Shaqqa was gunned down in Malta by suspected Israeli agents on Oct. 26.

"Our military activity is the product of Israeli occupation and will continue as long as the occupation continues," he said, adding that the targets were "carefully chosen military ones and settlements inside Palestine."

"But our jihad (boly war) is not only military. We are not an armed gang. We're advocates of an Islamic project," he said.

Rare communist confluence in fast-changing China

By Jeffrey Parker
Reuter

BEIJING — Whether by accident or design, Beijing this week finds itself at the vortex of yesterday's ideology, hosting overlapping visits by the last leaders of world communism — Cuba and Vietnam.

All that prevents a global communist summit is the absence of China's mercurial neighbour, North Korea, which technically has had no leader to send since the death of Kim Il Sung last year.

Pyeongyang's putative leader Kim Jong-il has yet to assume his father Kim Il-Sung's titles as party chief and head of state.

Vietnamese Communist Party chief Do Muoi arrived on Sunday for a seven-day stay that overlaps with Cuban president and Communist Party chief Fidel Castro's first visit to the Chinese People's Republic, a 10-day tour beginning on November 29.

In the traditional socialist manner, details of their trips were not disclosed, although the party-run People's Daily ran a front-page picture and biography of "comrade Do Muoi."

It was not immediately known if Mr. Do Muoi, Mr. Castro and Chinese Communist Party chief Jiang Zemin would all sit down together.

A foreign ministry spokesman said on Thursday that China was hosting two bilateral meetings, rather than something more, but ideological ironies abound whether they meet or not.

Although China stands alone as the last big country ruled by a Communist Party, it is loath to acknowledge leadership of the socialist world — and would hardly qualify to lead a summit of world proletarian parties.

After disastrous experiments with forced collectivisation and other flights of Stalinist fancy, China jettisoned Marxist economics after 1978 when Deng Xiaoping launched the era of market pricing, stock and futures exchanges, private ownership, Roll-Royces and self-made millionaires.

Analysts say Mr. Deng's genius was his insistence on keeping the labels "socialist" to describe his ever more capitalist economy and "communist" for the

ever more pragmatic ruling party.

Perhaps the greatest irony of all is that rump Communists Cuba and Vietnam can't get enough of Mr. Deng's "Socialist market economy" and are keen to mimic his not-so-socialist success.

Both covet China's astonishing economic revival, which has unleashed 16 years of double-digit economic growth and created a global trade giant and regional military power, although Beijing is still struggling with its most daunting task, rejuvenating the vast but uncompetitive state-owned industries, and remains plagued by party corruption.

Cuba, tormented more than ever by the United States-led trade embargo now that its longtime Soviet benefactors have thrown in the ideological towel, was never close to China, which through much of its 46 years of communist rule has been at odds with Moscow.

Since the Soviet collapse, Cuba has worked hard to kindle a friendship with China that has come to be seen by both sides as excellent. China's food industry and distillers offer a key market for the main Cuban export, sugar, while Cuba is eager to buy cheap Chinese foods, medicines and manufactured goods.

Analysts say Mr. Castro sees China as a model for emerging from economic malaise and diplomatic isolation without meeting the same fate as his Soviet and eastern European socialist kin.

Havana said on Saturday it was restoring personal income tax for well-to-do Cubans, restoring something that was abolished as an evil of capitalism after the 1959 Communist Revolution.

Despite lingering pain and dislocation dating to the Vietnam war, Hanoi has made great strides towards overcoming estrangement from the United States and other Western powers by swiftly learning the ropes of Chinese-style economic pragmatism.

In the process, Vietnam normalised relations with China in 1991, 12 years after they fought an unseemly inter-communist border war, and now appears to regard its vast northern neighbour more as an economic partner than ideological ally.

Med states dream of rivalling Asia as prosperity zone

BARCELONA (AFP) — The European (EU) and its Mediterranean neighbours are sitting down together here for the first time with the express aim of turning the region into a thriving free trade zone capable of rivalling Asian markets.

The unprecedented Barcelona conference is to end Tuesday with a joint declaration setting out a vision of an end to trade barriers throughout the Mediterranean by 2010.

The 15 EU countries at the conference are putting up \$12 billion in aid and soft loans to their 12 Mediterranean partners to cushion the shock of opening up their markets for the first time.

In return, Europe hopes to have a ready market for its industrial goods and services on its doorstep as well as areas of cheap labour costs to build its factories.

"The opening up of markets is an unstoppable process with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the emergence of the extremely competitive Asian economies," a EU official at the conference said. "The Mediterranean cannot rely on simply being cheap any more now that areas like South East Asia are efficient and productive as well."

At present, the European Union's sales to the southern Mediterranean countries stand at only 8.5 per cent of its total exports, while imports are 6.8 per cent of the total. "Yet the Mediterranean has the geographical advantage because of its proximity to Europe and there is enormous potential there," the European Commission official said.

The argument that European countries will have an alternative to Asia in which to build their factories and take advantage of low labour costs is a "painful" but important one, he added. "There is a lot of de-location going on, and we can't deny the advantages of having low costs as well as the drawbacks," the official pointed out.

The EU already has

association accords with Israel, Tunisia, Morocco, and is negotiating deals with Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon.

It hopes that the collective effort to open up Mediterranean countries to each other as well as to the EU will bring other benefits as well as economic development.

By promoting jobs and prosperity in the poorer countries, the EU aims to reduce the flow of immigrants from the southern Mediterranean who already number 10 million inhabitants in EU countries.

"We can either export stability or import instability," the EU delegate said.

Another advantage to a Euro-Mediterranean economic partnership is the benefit it could have for the Arab-Israeli peace process.

The EU has said it will favour regional as opposed to national projects — such as roads, pipelines and water projects — when it comes to handing out the money on offer.

And it points to the participation of Syria, which has boycotted previous international conferences involving Israel, as a sign that Europe's "carrot rather than the stick" policy may have some success where the peace initiatives of the United States have failed.

"Syria's participation and interest in the idea of free trade is being seen as a major achievement," the E.U. official said. "It gives Syria a way into the peace process without looking like a wimp."

However, Europe recognises there is a long way to go before its vision becomes reality, and that Middle East politics will play a large part.

The idea of free trade with the Palestinians, for example, is a pipe dream until it is possible to travel to self-ruled Gaza without having to change cars at the border with Israel, going through checkpoints and signing papers.

The final declaration will push the idea of political reform and cooperation between the countries in the region.

Militants paralyse railways as France faces chaotic week

PARIS (AFP) — Militant strikers paralysed the French railway system Monday ahead of a general strike Tuesday that threatens to bring the whole country to a halt.

On the fourth day of a crippling protest, drivers hardened their strike, forcing the state-owned railway company SNCF to cancel five out of six trains. In the Paris region, virtually no commuter trains served the suburbs.

The SNCF gave up trying to run trains between Paris and the south-western city of Bordeaux after railwaymen blocked a high-speed TGV train on that route in the station in the western city of Angoulême. Passengers were transferred on to buses.

Strikers also blocked the line between Paris and the Normandy city of Rouen, cutting all services, and the railway company had to divert a TGV after railwaymen cut the line between the capital and Lille, in the north, where workers occupied a signal room.

As two of the country's three main unions prepared for a general strike on Tuesday, only four days after a public sector stoppage that paralysed the country on Friday, railway depot after railway depot voted to continue the strike and whole regions of the country were almost entirely without trains.

Meanwhile students protesting university underfunding planned a mass day of protest next Thursday for the second time in a week.

The communist-led CGT trade union is joining Tuesday's strike called by the independent union Force Ouvre to protest conservative Prime Minister Alain Juppé's plan to reform the welfare system to cut deficits.

But a third union, the pro-socialist CFDT, is not taking part, giving the government hope that it can divide and rule.

On Monday most Paris train stations were out of action for the day. Bus services were cut in half for the Paris metropolitan area and suburbs, the Paris public transport company, the RATP, said.

But the metro was running as usual, although it was expected to be hit on Tuesday.

The RATP accused the CGT trade union of interfering with the "freedom to work" by organising pickets at some bus depots and failing to give strike notice.

The railway union as well

the government to take over most or all of the SNCF's massive 175 billion francs (\$35 billion) debt as part of a five-year development plan which, it is predicted, will try to make savings through job cuts, wage controls, productivity gains and transferring responsibility for loss-making regional lines to regional authorities.

Details will be formally unveiled Friday.

A spokesman for the opposition Socialist Party, François Hollande, Monday described the situation as "extremely tense" and warned that it could become explosive if the government refused to back down.

The train drivers also fear they will lose their privileged pension status under a reform of the French welfare system announced by Mr. Juppé two weeks ago. At present, railway workers are permitted to retire on a full pension at 50, ten years earlier than most public sector workers.

Mr. Juppé's welfare reform plan calls for public sector workers to work for 40 years, instead of 37.5 years as at present, to qualify for a full pension.

The trade unions say that the SNCF's chronic deficit stems entirely from servicing its accumulated debt.

Apart from curbing pension rights, the Juppé plan will levy a new tax to help pay off an accumulated social security deficit that will reach 250 billion francs (\$50 billion) by the end of the year.

Government spokesman Alain Lamoussière said the plan is open to consultation, but only on ways of achieving the savings sought by Mr. Juppé, and will not back down.

The government considers the reforms are essential if France is to stand any chance of cutting public deficits to be ready for European economic and monetary union (EMU) by the Maastricht treaty deadline of Jan. 1, 1999.

CFDT leader Nicole Notat has approved the main lines of the Juppé plan.



French railway workers and train drivers raise their hands in a motion to continue their strike outside the closed Nice

railway station. Rail staff are protesting French Prime Minister Alain Juppé's austerity plan (Reuters photo)

Intra-Asian trade with China grows

SINGAPORE (AFP) — China's trade with the rest of Asia has grown dramatically over the past decade, raising the country's stature as a market and outweighing its threat as a potential competitor to booming regional economies, said a report.

Regional exports to the China/Hong Kong market grew from \$18.3 billion in 1984 to \$120.07 billion in 1994, said the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC).

Imports from the market grew from \$18.2 billion to \$102.82 billion, PERC said in its latest Asian Intelligence report which analysed China's growing impact on Asia.

It based the report on an analysis of China's trade with Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand. The China/Hong Kong market were combined because many exports to China go through the territory and are difficult to distinguish,

the organisation said, noting also that Hong Kong would become a part of China in 1997.

Exports to the market accounted for 12.28 per cent of overall regional exports, up from 5.5 per cent in 1984, while imports grew to 11.62 per cent from 6.28 per cent.

"It has largely been because of China's rapid growth that smaller Asian neighbours have been able to continue growing rapidly even during periods of recession in traditional markets like the U.S., Europe and Japan," PERC said.

"In other words, China's importance as a market so far has been outweighing its threat as a regional competitor for most countries Asia,"

the Hong Kong-based consultancy said.

It cited forecasts for specific industries to outline China's importance as a market.

China has become the second largest beer-consuming country and by the end of the decade will overtake the United States as the largest.

It will be installing nearly 10 times more telephones than the second leading growth market in Asia — India — and in power, will be adding every year the current total generating capacity that exists in Switzerland.

The growth in intra-regional trade, with China at its centre, has also been accompanied by a dramatic increase in intra-Asia direct

investment with most of the investment flowing to China, PERC said.

Japan and South Korea have been big investors, but the biggest have been ethnic Chinese.

"Most of this investment has come from Taiwan and Hong Kong, but significant amounts have also come from Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand," helping bind their economies more closely to China, it said.

The report described cross-border business interests of ethnic Chinese as the "glue linking China to other Asian countries."

But it cautioned that this had mixed implications.

"The really important thing to note is that no matter which scenario you paint for China's future, it will entail significant risks as well as opportunities," the report pointed out.

"Every economy in Asia would feel the shock in a 'very negative way initially' if China's economy were to slump 'badly for a sustained period' during a post-Deng Xiaoping transition phase, the report warned."

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Know what your personal aims are today and just how best to gain them in a most ethical and efficient manner. Be more concerned with the modern.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) The most powerful person you know can give you excellent advice at this time to improve your lot in life, so listen carefully.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You are inspired just how to gain your finest aspirations today, so put your idea in operation quickly. Meet persons who can help.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Your mate is relying on you for succour from worry today, so do something special for this person later this evening and you will get overwhelming appreciation.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Contact the most informed persons you know today and let them advise you how best to gain your aims of a personal nature.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Striking out in new directions where your career is concerned is wise today if you are to advance and be successful. Stay alert.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You have an unexpected invitation which could bring you much pleasure at this time and meet persons who are very progressive.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Take in added interests with kin at this time and get out of that comfortable rut you are in which is not very profitable.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get into civic career activities today which awaits you and confer with those of much experience in them for best results.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Study your property and other possessions at this time and try to make them more modern and through this add to their value.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Bring those fine talents you have to the forefront at this time and you get excellent results in dealing with others in higher positions.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Be more cognizant of what is going on in the modern age at this time instead of being so fixed with the traditional methods of operation.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye.

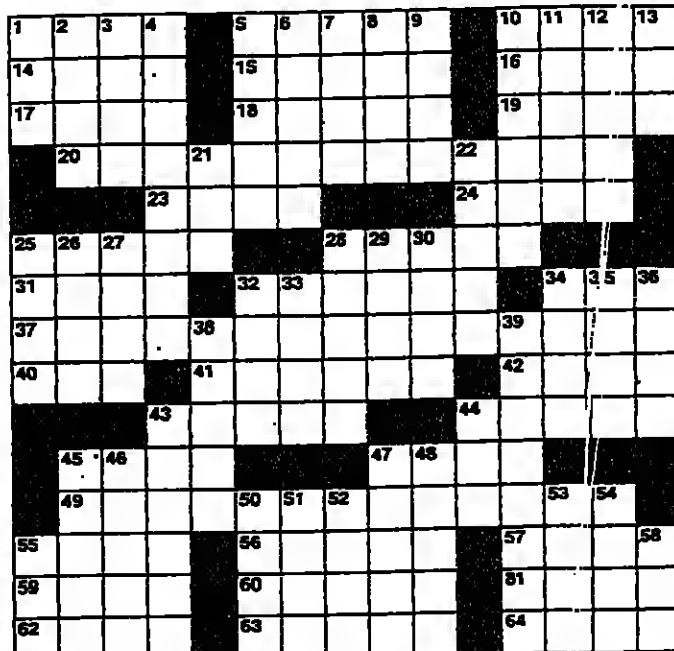
THE Daily Crossword by Diane C. Baldwin

ACROSS

- 1 Forearm bone
- 5 Send in payment
- 10 Enjoy gum
- 14 Night brightener
- 15 Entertain
- 16 "Whatever — wants..."
- 17 Improve a road
- 18 More pleasant
- 19 Candid
- 20 Took the consequences
- 23 Calendar segments
- 24 Annoying one
- 25 Mete out
- 28 Flatten wrinkles
- 31 Ram
- 32 Make a wheat bundle
- 34 Moist
- 37 Well-prepared for battle
- 40 House member, briefly
- 41 Lax
- 42 Bigfoot
- 43 Lab tube: var.
- 44 Auto type
- 45 Beginning
- 47 Defeat
- 49 Picked up the tab
- 55 Auctioneer's cry
- 56 "Sound of Music" heroine
- 57 Roofline feature
- 59 Hammer or saw
- 60 Motionless
- 61 Vandyke site
- 62 Otherwise
- 63 Stagers
- 64 Railroad name

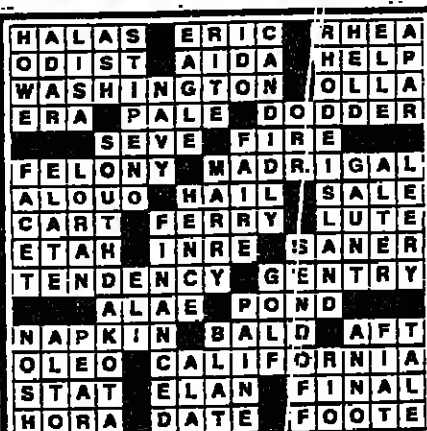
DOWN

- 1 Ref's cousin
- 2 Bread unit
- 3 — Scotia
- 4 Short yarn
- 5 Actor Quaid
- 6 Sends out
- 7 A lot
- 8 Words of understanding
- 9 Semester



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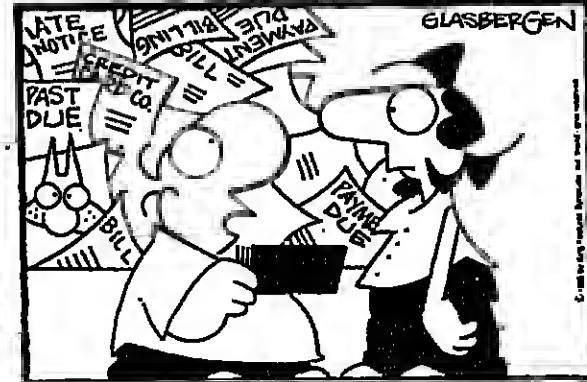
Yesterday's puzzle solved:



- 46 Arias
- 47 Revolve rapidly
- 48 Inflames
- 50 Arab VIP
- 51 Odense native
- 52 Shoe or hat end
- 53 "Oz" actor Bert
- 54 57
- 55 Sault — Marie
- 58 Vane dir.

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



"I ordered checks with angels printed on them...since we're barely getting by on a wing and a prayer!"

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Matt'n Jeff





Injured cricket fans lay on the ground awaiting medical attention after a portion of the Vidarbha Cricket Stadium collapsed on Sunday (Reuters photo)

Doctors battle to treat cricket tragedy victims

NAGPUR, India (AFP) — Doctors battled Monday to save critically injured victims of the Nagpur cricket tragedy for which an official investigation has been ordered.

The collapse of a wall during the one-day international between India and New Zealand at the Vidarbha Cricket Association (VCA) stadium in the western city left nine dead and around 70 injured.

Vidyal Mahadev Khare, a surgeon at the state-run Indira Gandhi Medical College General Hospital, said five of the 55 patients admitted there after the collapse were in critical condition.

"It was very difficult to treat the patients initially because thousands of friends, relatives and well-wishers crowded the hospital," he told AFP. "Now we have streamlined operations a little bit."

"We are doing every bit to treat the patients. Some colleagues have been working round-the-clock and the state government has offered us every help," he said.

The stadium is to host a cricket World Cup match between West Indies and Zimbabwe early next year.

The tragedy occurred when a large crowd in the eastern stand rushed up a narrow staircase just before the lunch break to look down on the pitch, witnesses said.

The wall collapsed without warning, they added, and around 100 people fell almost 40 feet (12 metres).

The brick stand was renovated last month with the World Cup in mind at a cost of 30 million rupees (\$937,500). Capacity has been increased to 40,000 spectators from 24,000.

Some 40,000 people were at the match, in which New Zealand defeated India by 99 runs after running up a mammoth 348 for eight, the third-highest score in one-day internationals.

Many people who witnessed the accident shouted demands that the match be abandoned during the lunch interval, but a VCA official said "there would have been a riot if we had done that."

The New Zealand and Indian players were not told of the deaths until after the match.

The government of Maharashtra state, of which Nagpur is winter capital, ordered an inquiry late Sunday. It is to give 50,000 rupees (\$1,500) to the family of each of the dead and 5,000 rupees (\$156) each to the injured.

The VCA is also to give 50,000 rupees to the families of the dead and pay for the treatment of injured, according to its President Prabhakar Ramachandra Mundle.

Miklavc edges Meyer in World Cup slalom

PARK CITY, Utah (R) — Unheralded Andrej Miklavc of Slovenia on Sunday won a World Cup slalom race that featured one of the oddest results of this, or any, season.

The 25-year-old outsider produced a remarkable second run to record a two-run total time of one minute 38.72 seconds, an eyeblink ahead of Christian Mayer of Austria, who clocked 1:38.73.

Fabio de Cringis of Italy made it a clean podium sweep for racers who began in the second seed group, finishing third with a time of 1:38.84.

Sebastien Amiez of France, leader after the first run, faded to fourth in 1:38.95. Jure Kosir added to the Slovenian success by coming in fifth, just ahead of teammate Mitja Kunc in sixth.

Miklavc, who was only 13 quickest in the first run and had never finished higher than eighth in a World Cup race, demonstrated he has recovered fully from a serious knee injury he suffered just eight months ago.

Miklavc benefited from starting third on the second run, before a sudden snow squall made visibility more difficult and softened the snow.

The Slovenian also was aided by the misfortune of a number of leading racers.

Alberto Tomba of Italy left the course on the first run, as did Michael Trischer of Austria, who won last week's slalom, and current World Cup leader Michael Von Gernglen of Switzerland, winner of Saturday's giant slalom.

Lasse Kjus of Norway, who was second after the first run and had a chance to overtake Von Gernglen in the overall standings, skidded off the course in his second run.

Miklavc saw a rare window of opportunity and leaped through it.

"I quickly realised I had the perfect chance, the perfect start for the second run," he said in his prime start position on the deteriorating course.

It was no coincidence that Miklavc (19), Mayer (21) and De Cringis (18) all began the first run with undesirable start positions.

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South Africa win Four Nations Cup

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Hosts South Africa won the Four Nations Cup on Sunday with a 2-0 victory over neighbours Zimbabwe in the final match of the six-day tournament at soccer city.

South Africa finished with seven points, three more than second-placed Egypt, who beat Zambia 3-1 earlier in front of some 30,000 spectators in Johannesburg.

The goals from Sean Bartlett gave South Africa their 2-0 win and victory in the tournament, designed as a warm-up for the country's hosting of the African Nations Cup finals in January.

Bartlett beat Zimbabwean goalkeeper Bruce Grobelaar after 20 minutes for the opening goal and wrapped up proceedings with his second 10 minutes from the end.

Grobelaar made two brilliant stops to deny South Africa an even bigger winning margin.

But South Africa spent a good deal of their time on the backfoot against a makeshift Zimbabwean side, who were late replacements for Nigeria in the four-team line-up.

Nigeria had their invitation withdrawn after the hanging of dissident Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others earlier this month.

Egypt, who had been beaten by South Africa on Friday night, rebounded back with a polished performance against a tired Zambian team.

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Aberdeen win Scottish League Cup

GLASGOW (R) — Aberdeen ended five barren years without a trophy when goals from Billy Dodds and Duncan Shearer gave them a 2-0 victory over Dundee in the Scottish League Cup final at Hampden Park on Sunday.

The victory clinched a place for Aberdeen in next season's UEFA Cup — a remarkable turnaround for the club that came close to being relegated for the first time in its 92-year history just seven months ago.

Dodds, who spent five years at Dundee, cracked home the opening goal against his old team after 33 minutes when Dundee's French goalkeeper Michel Pageaud failed to hold a cross-shot from Stephen Glass. Dodds fired in the rebound for his fifth goal in the competition.

Shearer, 33, a late replacement for the injured Scott Booth, headed home the second from a glass cross after 46 minutes to effectively settle the tie.

For although the first division side battled gamely — especially after substitutes Gerry Britton and Ian Anderson replaced Paul Tosh and Neil McCann for the last third of the match — Aberdeen were never seriously troubled and well worth their victory in the 50th league cup final.

Manager Roy Aitken said afterwards: "I feel we played well and dominated the match and got our justifiable reward. A club like Aberdeen needs to win trophies and this is a significant step in the re-building process."

Aberdeen, who won 10 major domestic trophies between 1979 and 1990 and the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1983, dominated most of the match with Dundee-born Glass, Brian Grant, Eoin Jess and skipper Stewart McKimmie a continual threat.

Dundee, who knocked out premier division sides Kilmarnock and Hearts on their way to the final, were not disgraced but never hinted that they could repeat Raith Rovers' shock defeat over Celtic in this final a year ago.

As well as ending Aberdeen's wait for a first trophy since they last won the Scottish Cup in 1990, the match was also the last played at Hampden Park before the historic south stand is demolished to make way for a new grandstand.

Blackburn regain some self-respect

In London, beleaguered English champions Blackburn drew 0-0 at high-flying Arsenal on Sunday and although they are still searching for their first away win of the season, at least they regained some self-respect.

Four days after the televised fight between Blackburn team mates Greame Le

with 38 points, followed by Manchester United, who play Nottingham Forest on Monday, on 32 points. Arsenal stay third on 28 points, with Blackburn back in 13th place with only 17.

Although Blackburn never reached the heights of last week's 7-0 win over Nottingham Forest, they were greatly improved from their losing 3-0 display in Moscow and showed no signs of the alleged dressing room schisms and dissent that surfaced in Moscow. Batty's first

BRITISH SOCCER

Saux and David Barry during their abject display in losing 3-0 to Spartak Moscow in the Champions League, Blackburn produced a committed, United front to secure only their second away point in the Premier League this season.

They also ended Arsenal's run of seven successive home wins and dented the Gunners' assault on the top placings.

Newcastle, who beat Leeds 2-1 on Saturday, top the table

pass to Le Saux after five minutes raised gentle, ironic cheers from the crowd.

Dutchman Dennis Bergkamp should have done better when he headed wide of the post from a Paul Merson cross midway through the second half.

Rovers thought they had won it in the last minute when Mike Newell hooked the ball home from an Alan Shearer flick, only for the goal to be wiped out by an offside flag.

Europe's big shots turn to the machine gun

PARIS (AFP) — Europe's big shots packed away their sniper rifles and turned to the machine gun at the weekend, blasting the opposition with a flurry of goals.

Germany's leaders Borussia Dortmund won 2-0. Paris Saint Germain went one better at the top of the French league, as did Italy's AC Milan and Atletico Madrid in Spain.

Dutch challengers PSV Eindhoven, meanwhile, upped the tempo with five without reply but even they were trumped by Portuguese pace setters FC Porto and Sporting Lisbon, who both bit their rivals for six.

There were fall-guys among the big names, however.

Bayern Munich's dismal 0-0 draw at bottom club FC Cologne on Sunday allowed Borussia, whose goals came from Jurgen Kobler and Michael Zorc, to edge two points clear in the Bundesliga.

Milan, meanwhile, also edged two points ahead as Serie A's second-placed side Parma was held 1-1 at home by Juventus.

Milan's ambitious tactics of playing a three-pronged attack of Yugoslav Dejan Savicevic — who got the first goal after just six minutes — Liberian George Weah and Roberto Baggio paid off with a 3-0 success over Piacenza.

Parma's point came from a 45th minute equaliser from Colombian Faustino Asprilla after a ninth-minute opener from defender Ciro Ferrara.

Atletico Madrid's reign in Spain was also given crucial

help. While Atletico won 3-0 against Oviedo, Barcelona and Espanol both managed no more than 1-1 draws at the weekend. Johann Cruyff's side against Real Sociedad and Espanol against Zaragoza. Those results also gave Atletico the luxury of a two-point cushion.

And it was the same storyline in France, where Paris Saint Germain's 3-0 win over Bordeaux only gave them a seven-point advantage at the halfway stage of the championship campaign after chief rivals Auxerre had contrived to lose 2-1 to 10-man Guingamp.

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Tenders and Procurement Department
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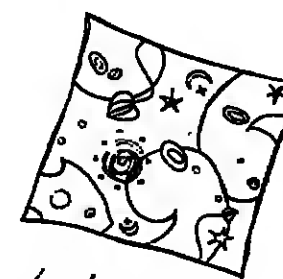
Eng. Heshem Al-Shboul
Secretary General
Jordan Valley Authority

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WITH OMAR SHARIF
A TANNIA HIRSCH

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:	What action do you take?
AAQ 7K876 0654 AAQJ3	Q. 4 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
The bidding has proceeded:	AJ109875 0A103 0K8 4A5
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST	The bidding has proceeded:
10 Pass 2a Pass	SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
20 Pass 7 Pass	1a Pass 10 Pass
What do you bid now?	2a Pass 4a Pass
Q. 2 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:	What action do you take?
AAK7 772 0K185 AAQJ105	Q. 5 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
The bidding has proceeded:	AQJ8 0K7855 0A7 AKQ10
WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH	The bidding has proceeded:
10 Pass Pass Dbl	NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
Pass 2a Pass 7	1a Pass 10 Pass
What do you bid now?	2a Pass 2
Q. 3 - East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:	What do you bid now?
AJ2 0Q63 0Q753 AKJ82	Q. 6 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
The bidding has proceeded:	AKQJ5 07 0AJ652 AK76
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST	Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one diamond.
1a Pass INT Pass	What action do you take?
2a Pass SNT Pass	
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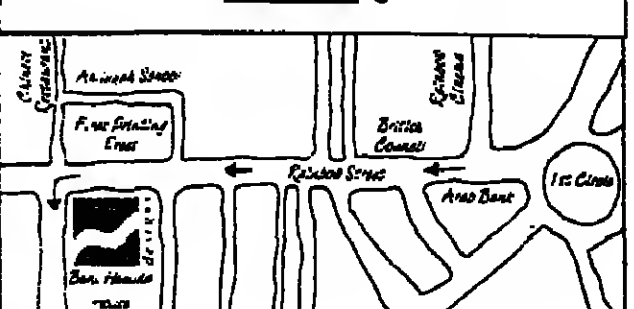
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Libyan exile found murdered in London; dissidents blame Tripoli

LONDON (Agencies) — British police on Monday appealed for witnesses to the murder of a prominent opponent of Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi.

Ali Mohammad Abu Zeid was found stabbed to death on Sunday at his London grocery in west London.

A Libyan opposition group accused Libyan government agents of the murder, while Libyan Foreign Minister sources, quoted by the official Libyan news agency JANA, said Tripoli had asked Britain if it could participate in the investigation.

In London, police said they did not know if anything had been stolen from the shop and said they had an "open mind" on the motive for the killing.

They appealed for anyone near the shop early on Sunday and who might have seen anything suspicious to contact them.

"At the moment we are keeping an open mind in regard to the motive for the murder," a police spokesman said, adding there was "no evidence" pointing to a political killing.

Libya has asked to take part in the investigation into the murder of Abu Zeid, the

official Libyan news agency JANA said.

It said the request from Libya's justice ministry was delivered to the British authorities by the Libyan interests section in London, in the absence of diplomatic ties.

JANA identified the man as Mohammad Abu Zeid, a Libyan citizen.

Abu Zeid, who is married and has children, was an active opponent of the Libyan regime, the BBC reported. He was killed for 20 months in 1993 for dissident activity.

Two years later he left for Britain.

In 1981, he helped found the main Libyan opposition movement, the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL). The BBC said he was involved in a plot, organised from Tunis, to assassinate Colonel Qadhafi in Tripoli in May 1984.

Since 1980, at least 15 Libyan opposition leaders in exile have been murdered in London, Rome or Athens. Of those, nine took place between March and June 1980.

In September 1984, Mohammad Khomsni was found strangled to death in

his hotel room in Rome. In July 1984, Attia Al-Faratah and Abdul Al-Zami were shot dead in Athens. In June 1984, Mohammad Salek Choteiti was shot dead in Athens.

The London-based NFSL's stated aim is to fight for "freedom and democracy in Libya."

"There is nothing that makes us doubt it is a political assassination. Qadhafi has a long history of political assassinations. We are sure it is Qadhafi," said Mohammad Fayed Jibril, Cairo-based spokesman for the NFSL.

Mr. Jibril told Reuters a relative of Abu Zeid in the United States had in the past week warned him of a threat to his life.

Mr. Jibril said that in 1984 Col. Qadhafi accused Mr. Abu Zeid of organising an assassination attempt. "Abu Zeid's murder is personal revenge by Qadhafi," he added.

Libyan authorities had recently started putting pressure on the families of exiled opponents and the NFSL had contacted U.S., British and other European authorities to warn them of the presence of Libyan government agents, Mr. Jibril said.



SHOW OF STRENGTH: Israeli soldiers conduct manoeuvres on the occupied Golan Heights on Sunday during a visit by Israeli President Ezer Weizman to the strategic heights that Israel seized in the 1967 war. Syria's demand for Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights and Israel's insistence that the pullout, under certain conditions, should come in return for full peace with Syria have deadlocked Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations (see related story on page one) (AFP photo)



Islamists control Jordan Engineers Association

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Islamists scored a landslide victory in the elections for the seven branches of the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA), taking control of 40 out of 49 seats. One of the winners was an Islamist woman.

The outcome, crucial to the shape of the JEA council whose elections are expected to be held in February, showed that the Islamists took full control of all seats of two JEA branches, chemical and applied engineering, and the majority of seats in the remaining five branches.

The "White" or Islamists bloc won six out of the seven seats in the civil engineering sector. They also scored the same result in two other branches, the architectural and the electrical engineering. They won four out of seven seats in the mining and the mechanical sectors.

Wafa Ahmad Alayan, who ran for elections in the architectural sector, was the only woman elected out of five women candidates.

Islamists, reacting to the recent controversy over the role of professional associations, say the outcome of

elections shows the real political trend within the association — that the majority of members are against normalisation of relations with Israel. However, the figures do not exactly reflect the political trend of the majority of members.

The number of those who voted in the seven different sectors was 6,282, out of a total of 19,961 eligible voters. The total number of JEA members is estimated at around 32,000.

As such, those who voted represented only 30 per cent of those who have the right to vote. The percentage of voters to the total number of registered engineers does not exceed 17 per cent.

His Majesty King Hussein in a recent speech stressed the need to separate politics from professional work at the unions.

He called twice in the past two weeks on the silent majority to come out and express its support for peace showing dismay at the stand of several associations who have threatened their members of dismissal if they made contacts with Israel.

The King called on the associations to leave politics for politicians and asked the Higher Council for the Inter-

pretation of the Constitution to rule on the legality of the powers exercised by the association.

But except for one demonstration staged by some 200 engineers last week, the majority of members of the JEA at least 13,000, abstained, not only from demonstrating, but also from taking part in their own elections.

The result of the seven sectors are indicators of the final shape of the JEA council. Islamists have secured at least three seats in the JEA council since they won full seats in two branches and six out of seven seats in the civil engineering sector, which is represented by one seat each at the council.

Except for the seats of the president and vice-president, JEA members do not have the right to nominate themselves as candidates for the council elections unless they were elected members to the councils of the seven different branches.

It is yet not clear whether Leith Shubailat, the incumbent JEA president, will nominate himself for a second term.

Lebanon guerrillas lob rockets into Israel

KIRYAT SHMONA (R) — Guerrillas in South Lebanon fired two rounds of Katyusha rockets on Monday at Israel, and some of them landed inside the Jewish state.

An Israeli army spokesman said one rocket landed inside Israel near its northern border in an early morning attack but did not cause any casualties.

Israel radio later reported a second round of Katyusha rockets landed in northern Israel several hours later. The radio said there were no casualties or damage. It did not say how many rockets landed inside Israel from the second round.

No Lebanese group claimed immediate responsibility for the attacks and a spokesman in Beirut for the pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) said it had no information on them.

Hizbollah, which leads the Islamic resistance trying to drive the Israelis out of Lebanon, has a policy of firing Katyushas at Israel whenever the Israelis bombard civilian-occupied villages in South Lebanon.

The pro-Israeli militia sources said Israeli artillery inside the Jewish state's South Lebanon occupation zone bombed possible Hizbollah hideouts in the western part of the Bekaa Valley in retaliation.

On Sunday, Lebanese security sources reported that Israeli forces fired shells at guerrillas outside its South Lebanon occupation zone, killing one and wounding three.

Lebanese sources said on Monday a second man had died of wounds from the anti-personnel shells packed with steel darts.

Surgeon Mahmoud Hamud said the fighter died from internal injuries caused by a cluster bomb, which had exploded imbedding "several nails" in his body and in the other wounded men.

Cluster bombs are banned under international conventions, but the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has in the past accused Israel of using them in South Lebanon.

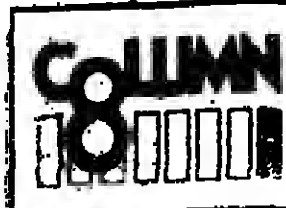
The flare-up in violence reignited tension on the border but Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres played down the attack without blaming Syria.

Mr. Peres refused to blame Syria for the attack before the parliamentary foreign affairs and defence committee. "It is just one shot, there is no need to create a fuss," he said.

Israel usually holds Syria responsible for anti-Israeli guerrilla attacks in South Lebanon.

The rocket attacks were linked to the killing of Islamic Jihad leader Fathi Shaqaqi on Oct. 26, military officials said.

The Palestinian group has blamed the killing on Mossad secret service agents, and Israel has ordered security to be stepped up at embassies and offices abroad as the end of a 40-day mourning period for Shaqaqi nears.



Most Americans say speaking a 2nd language is important

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Nearly three-quarters of adult Americans believe it is important or extremely important to speak a second language, according to a poll by CNN television and U.S. News And World Report released Sunday. A survey this month of 824 adults found that 34 per cent of adults believe it is "extremely important" to speak a second language, while 40 per cent believe it is "somewhat important," and only 25 per cent believe it is unimportant. The numbers varied little with variations in age, gender, income and education, the poll showed. The most popular second languages among those who studied them was Spanish, studied by 54 per cent, and French, studied by 34 per cent. Latin and German followed with 11 per cent and nine per cent, respectively. The most popular way to learn a second language was living where a language is spoken (33 per cent), teaching oneself with a book (30 per cent), listening to tapes (24 per cent), taking private lessons (11 per cent), and using an electronic translator (six per cent). The vast majority, 87 per cent of respondents, said they believed it was "never too late" to learn a second language, the CNN/U.S. News poll found.

Premier says no to birthday, New Year's cards

HANOI (AP) — Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet doesn't want any birthday or New Year's greetings, thank you. He has asked governors, mayors and foreign embassies to hold the cards and flowers in order to save money, according to the weekend edition of Tuoi Tre (Youth) newspaper. Mr. Kiet also has instructed government offices to cut back on large-scale gatherings to mark anniversaries and traditional holidays, saying they put an unnecessary burden on the state budget. "All that money and (organisational) effort is taken from the ordinary people," Tuoi Tre quoted Mr. Kiet as saying in a recent letter to government offices. "We don't have the right, and we cannot continue this kind of waste." Vietnamese officials have expressed concern about the growing state budget deficit, which Deputy Prime Minister Phan Van Khai earlier this year called "the most critical problem faced by government." The deficit is not officially disclosed but Vietnamese newspapers have said it is expected to reach 9.2 trillion dong (\$836 million) this year.

2 Japanese schoolboys commit suicide

TOKYO (AFP) — Two Japanese schoolboys committed suicide Monday in separate incidents exactly one year after the highly publicised suicide of another boy who could no longer stand being bullied, police said. The body of a 13-year-old boy was found hanging from a rope attached to a basketball hoop in the northern city of Niigata, a spokesman for the Joetsu Minami Police Station said, adding that the case was being treated as suicide. Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK) said police had discovered a suicide note in which the boy complained about being bullied by classmates. In the second incident, police found the body of another 13-year-old boy hanging from a rope in Tottori in western Japan.

Leah Rabin assails Labour bid to woo religious parties

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The widow of slain Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Monday opposed a rapprochement between the new Israeli government and religious parties which already draw fire within the left wing ruling coalition.

"If the government tries to draw closer to the religious parties at the cost of the alliance with Meretz, that will not please me," Leah Rabin told state radio.

The ruling coalition led by new Prime Minister Shimon Peres is made up of the Labour Party with 44 deputies and the left-wing Meretz with 12 deputies, as well as the two right-wing dissidents. Five deputies from Israeli Arab parties also support the coalition in the 120-seat Knesset.

Mr. Peres has tried to attract greater support from the religious parties to isolate the main opposition right-wing group Likud, with just 11 months to go to general elections at the end of October 1996.

To help set up a dialogue with the religious parties and settlers he brought into his

government moderate Rabbi Yehuda Amital as a minister without portfolio.

There have also been contacts between Labour and the six deputies of the National Religious Party, forced into a period of soul-searching since Mr. Rabin's assassination on Nov. 4 by a Jewish fanatic.

In a U-turn, party leader Zvulun Hammer admitted on Sunday that the autonomy deals struck between Israel and the Palestinians were "irreversible."

"We consider the Oslo accords as a fait accompli even if we don't support them and will not give up our right to Eretz Israel," he said.

Mr. Hammer said Monday on the radio that "no government will start a war to get the army back into Gaza, Jericho or Jenin," referring to the areas where autonomy was launched in May 1994, and the first Palestinian town on the West Bank to be evacuated by Israeli troops under the September accords.

"What has been done is done. We must do everything we can to create a climate of dialogue and reconciliation with the government."

Search continues for two Libyans

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Security agents have drawn a wide dragnet for two mysterious Libyans who entered Jordan and appeared to have gone to ground immediately, security sources said Monday.

A report in a local weekly tabloid said the two, whose photographs appeared in the local press in two police notices seeking information on their whereabouts, had disappeared at the Jordanian-Syrian border point at Ramtha.

It was not immediately clear why the two men were wanted by the security authorities. In the first public notice in local newspapers, the security authorities said the two were wanted for financial misdeeds, but the second one said they were sought in connection with security issues.

According to the sources, the notices have drawn little clues to trace the two. It was not known when the two had entered Jordan.

The weekly tabloid Hadaf reported in its latest issue that the two, identified as Mufti Ali Masoud and Kamal Juma Ali, had vanished at the border with Syria, leaving their passports behind.

"As far as the security forces are concerned, the hunt is still on for the two," said a source, speaking on condition of anonymity. But the source declined to say why the two were wanted.

Al Hadaf quoted the Libyan charge d'affaires in Jordan, Siddiq Balqun, as dismissing reports that the two men were wanted for security reasons and saying that a "personal fraud" was behind

the affair.

The Public Security Department (PSD) said it had no information on the matter.

Al Hadaf quoted unidentified sources as saying that the two Libyans were involved in a "very dangerous" plot and that the two could be members of the Libyan external security forces "specialised" in eliminating Libyan exiles who oppose the regime of Muammar Qadhafi. However, no opponents of the Libyan strongman are known to be living in Jordan.

Libyan-Jordanian relations were estranged after the Feb. 2, 1994 assassination of a Jordanian diplomat in Beirut. Jordan accused an unidentified Arab country, widely believed to be Libya, of issuing the order for the assassination, which was carried out by confessed members of the Abu Nidal group.

The Libyan link with the assassins was established when one of them claimed in the court that he was behind the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in December 1988, and that Libya had no role in the attack. The claim was seen to be a smokescreen to clear Libya of American and British charges that it was behind the bombing.

Libya is an avowed opponent of Israel, but reports have suggested that Tripoli had tipped off the Israeli secret service Mossad of the travel schedule of Fathi Shaqaqi, leader of the Islamic Jihad group, and that the tip-off had allowed Mossad agents to gun him down on Oct. 26 in the Mediterranean island of Malta. Shaqaqi was on his way back to Syria from Libya.

JWA 'expels' Hisham Yanis

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Actor and script writer Hisham Yanis, known for his two plays "Hello Normalisation" and "Peace Ob Peace" that he performs with his colleague Nabil Sawalha, was expelled Monday from the Jordan Writers Association (JWA) for performing in Israel.

Mr. Yanis and Mr. Sawalha were received by Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres on Monday. Quoting the Israeli Radio, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the meeting centred on the importance of the Arab-Israeli peace process and ways of enhancing it.

No immediate comment was available from Mr. Yanis. Mr. Sawalha is not a member of the JWA. Seven members of the JWA administrative body voted in favour of the decision to expel Mr. Yanis. Only three voted against it. The association's president, Ibrahim Abi is out of the country.

"He (Mr. Yanis) violated the code of honour adopted last year by the association's general assembly," said Basel Raf'ieh, a member of the administrative body.

The "code of honour," adopted in August of 1994, bans members from contacts with Israel or any of the Israeli media. It also prohibits all kinds of cultural activities with Israel or Israelis. Any meeting or conference hosted or attended by Israelis is taboo for any member.

In July this year, the JWA sent a letter to Mr. Yanis warning him from programming in Israel and threatened him with dismissal if he insisted on going there. Mr. Yanis, however, apologised in a telephone call to Mr. Abi and promised he would not go, according to Mr. Raf'ieh.

Mr. Yanis left for Israel two weeks ago and appeared on Israeli television this week talking about his play.

"He tarnished the image of the association," Mr. Raf'ieh asserted. "He violated the JWA's resolutions which call for resisting normalisation with Israel."

"He is a bad example for Jordanians who love him and watch his play... artists and actors should be leading the public in the right path and not normalise relations with a country that occupies our lands and repress our people," he asserted.

Last year, JWA sacked Hamadeb Fara'neb for having given an interview to the Israeli television.

Mr. Zeroual bad named

Zeroual calls for national reconciliation but firm against extremism in inaugural speech

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Algerian President Liamine Zeroual on Monday appealed for dialogue and national reconciliation in his inaugural address but pledged to continue the fight against extremists who refuse to lay down their weapons.

"I call on young Algerians who have taken the wrong path to think about the choice of the people and get back on the right track," Mr. Zeroual said shortly after being sworn in.

"The savage acts in which criminals, traitors and mercenaries are trying to implicate them go against the values of our sacred religion and that of our people."

President Zeroual said the cabinet of Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi will remain in office until the end of the year.

Mr. Sifi presented his government's resignation earlier as is the tradition in Algeria when a president is sworn in. In a statement, Mr. Zeroual said he would retain the government "until the end of the year."

Mr. Sifi as head of government on April 15, 1994, to oversee what had been expected to be an initial three-year transition period that was cut short when Mr. Zeroual decided to schedule the country's first multi-party presidential election on Nov. 16.

Mr. Sifi's government notably dealt with sensitive economic issues, like rescheduling Algeria's foreign debt, and prepared the presidential election, which went off without the violence threatened by armed Islamic extremists who launched a campaign of insurgency in 1992 that has left between 35,000 to 40,000 people dead.

In his speech, which was very general and did not outline a specific programme, Mr. Zeroual also pledged to bold legislative and local elections but did not specify when they would take place.

"A national dialogue must lead to putting in place as soon as possible the necessary conditions for elections," he said.

He said restoring public order and security was one of his main priorities and his government would continue the struggle against "what is left of terrorist violence."

Mr. Zeroual earlier took his oath with his hand on the Koran, pledging to "respect and glorify the Islamic religion and to defend the constitution, to respect the free choice of the people as well as the institutions and laws of the republic."

He swore to "protect the freedom and basic rights of people and citizens, to work unceasingly for development and the prosperity of the people and to devote all my energy to achieving the ideals of justice, freedom and peace in the world."

Some leaders of a main militant group, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), said they were considering a unilateral ceasefire following last week's elections.

"I invite Algerian youth who are misled to look closely into the ruling passed by their people and to return to the correct path," Mr. Zeroual said, referring to the FIS leader Abbasi Madani.

But the ex-general vowed no let up in confrontation of militants who continued to fight the authorities.

"The state will continue its fight against the remnants of terrorist violence which target the homeland," he said.

The Algerian newspaper Tribune quoted FIS official Youcef Boubrak as saying: "The FIS's executive bureau is getting ready to announce in the next few days a unilateral truce if the good faith of President Zeroual's statements is not contradicted."

"This is the decision from inside the country," Mr. Boubrak added when asked if the move followed conciliatory statements by exiled FIS leader Rabbah Kebir, its spokesman in Europe.

Tribune said Mr. Boubrak spoke to one of its reporters by telephone. By his side as he spoke to the newspaper was Abdul Razak Rajam, former head of the office of jailed FIS leader Abbasi Madani.